

Poultry.

Winter Care of Fowls.

At this season of the year you should give your fowls more attention than at any other in order to make them profitable. One dozen eggs in the winter will command as good a price as three in the summer, and with a little care the fowls will pay as well or better than any stock on the farm.

If you desire your fowls to lay you must feed them well, keep them comfortable and give them work; unless they are employed this cold, windy weather they will huddle together and be shivering all the day. Throw into them a good layer of chaff, cornstalks, or what is better, if you have saved them, is dry leaves four or five inches in depth; and throw the corn, buckwheat, etc., among the chaff or leaves and you will see how soon they will come to the scratch—instead of seeing them standing around freezing, they will go to work, and will look warm and comfortable.

You will now require to give them a nice warm breakfast occasionally; boil a potful of potatoes and turnips, and then mix in shorts and cornmeal with a little salt and cayenne pepper. Avoid feeding them more than they will eat up perfectly clean, giving them fish, meat or scraps from a packing-house, and then give them the grain in the afternoon strewn among the straw. It will be necessary to remove the leaves, or whatever you may use, about once a week, and replenish with clean. Give the fowls as great a change of diet as possible, and as much green food as they will eat—such as cabbages and sliced apples—and always have a bundle of rowen in the house, so that they may help themselves to it, and if it has been well cured they will eat a great quantity, remembering to give them drink once a day, either water or milk; they are particularly fond of the latter.

It is necessary in the winter season to provide a dust bath for them, which may be done in this manner: Take a box about two feet square, fill it with sand and ashes, and if kept in good condition they will make good use of it. Pounded oyster-shells or lime and gravel should always be in the house for them, which furnishes the shell-making material, and is almost impossible for them to procure unless provided for them. Kill off all the fowls that are over three years old, as they do not lay nearly as well after that age.

Farmers will find this extra attention a good investment.

What Kind of Fowls.

Farmers should restock their poultry yards every two or three years, for the old breeds being bred in-and-in, soon run out and become unprofitable. It is not every farmer, however, that can afford to buy full-blood fowls of any kind sufficient to stock the place. In order to work into pure-bred chickens there are several methods of procedure, all very good, because very cheap. The first is to buy a couple of thorough-bred roosters and turn them with the native hens. If the Leghorn variety is selected the progeny will be far better layers than the old ones, partaking in a very great degree of the excellency of the new breed. Then, when the half-breeds commence to lay, sell off the old hens entirely, keeping only the half-breed pullets, also getting rid of the half-breed roosters, for the breed will not improve if they are kept. Keep the same thoroughbred roosters the second season, though it would be better to change every year. But under no circumstances should they be kept to cross on their own progeny longer than the second season. The first cross will be half-breeds, and if none but thoroughbred males are used, the second cross will be three-quarters pure blood, which for all practical purposes are equal to the thoroughbreds. If, however, after the first cross the half-breed roosters are kept, the grade will not improve and the chicks will still only be half-breeds, and poor ones at that. Hence it is important that none but thoroughbred males should be used.

As to the best breed, that depends on the circumstances. It is conceded on all hands that there is more money in eggs than in raising chickens, and if this branch of the business is followed, there is no fowl that can equal the Leghorn. They are good foragers, hunt their own living to a great extent, and are tough and hardy. It will be necessary to keep other breeds to hatch the eggs, as Leghorns will not sit.

Garden and Orchard.

Seasonable Hints—February.

BY HORTUS.

OUTDOOR WORK.

Orchard trees should be inspected several times during the winter season to see that they are not being injured by mice or other vermin girdling them; the snow should be firmly tramped around the base of the trunk of the tree, which from thus being compressed will freeze and soon resist any attempts of mice to penetrate it to get at the bark. It is generally toward spring that the mischief happens, and especially in severe winters such as we are now experiencing, is it more aggravated. We have seen trees eighteen inches in diameter totally ruined by these pests, when you would have thought from their size and strength that they would have been out of danger. When planting out young trees from the nursery, a great many persons forget to take off the labels, intending at some future time to make a record of the trees and varieties and then remove the labels; but the recording is never done and the labels are left on, and the trees grow and the wire cuts into the bark, till finally some day the top breaks off, and then there's a tree gone all through neglect to take off the labels. So it will be well to examine your young trees for any label wires. Any fine weather may be taken advantage of in the way of pruning and trimming.



If your trees are old and have been neglected, plenty of work will be found in removing dead branches, diseased limbs, suckers, and in scraping off the old loose bark. We would advise you to be careful in pruning off any large limbs. We would rather submit to a good deal of inconvenience from the position of large branches in the orchard than run the risk of removing them and endanger the usefulness of your trees. In a young orchard the knife should be used altogether instead of the saw, or in other words, keep the knife going so that the saw may never be required; by calculating the possible growth in the coming years from your knowledge of the fertility of the soil and the natural habit of the tree, you can so direct the growth of the tree, balancing the head, as it were, that in after years no large branches will require removing at all.

It would be well also to examine strawberry beds and borders of tender plants covered last fall, to see that they are not now exposed to the wind or other causes. The long sunny days and sharp freezing nights of spring months cause more damage to plants and fruit buds than any other means.

INDOOR WORK.

The root-grafting of apples, pears and plums, and the making of cuttings, may now be gone on with. Practical nurserymen will be well through with this work by this time, so as to enable them to get their pruning done. Root-grafting is an easy method to propagate rapidly fruit trees, and is light and pleasant employment during winter. The young growth of last season is used for cions, which are cut up by the grafter in two or three pieces, according to the strength of the cion. Seedling roots, from one to three years growth, are used to fit the cions to. The graft when made is about six inches long. The best grafts are made from the butt end of the cion fitted into

the collar of the root. For tying them, in former years waxed cloth and the waxed paper was used, but now waxed string is used instead, which has many advantages over the old methods. The string used is No. 8 cotton warp, which is put on a reel large enough to hold it taut. From this it is unwound, running it through melted wax and winding it on another reel, thus preparing it for tying the grafts; three or four twists of it is sufficient to hold the cion firmly on the root, like cut—when it is broken off—no knotting being required, enough wax being on the thread to make it stick.

The grafts are now packed away in sawdust in boxes and kept in a cool place till planting time comes.

Every plant and tree in a well ordered fruit garden should have a label to it with the name neatly written on it. The best labels are made from dry cedar—cut into blocks eighteen inches long, and split into pieces one and a half inches square. These are then shaved and pointed at one end to go into the ground. They should receive two coats of white or other light paint, and the sharp end dipped in coal tar. Labels thus made should last for ten years. It would be well to make these now ready for use.

PHYLLXERA IN VINERIES AND VINEYARDS.

We suspect there are very few graperies in Canada that are exempt from this pest. When plants are infested the leaves become yellow in patches and easily drop off, and the whole growth of the vine soon becomes puny and weak. Several remedies are in use, but from the insect working in the roots underneath the soil, it is difficult to apply any remedy that will not injure the plant. Flooding the ground with water for several days is practiced, but this requires the vineyard so situated that this may be practicable. We cannot advise anything better than to give the best care you can to the vines in the shape of thorough cultivation. Stirring the soil, and removing the same if old and exhausted, returning fresh loamy soil, sods, old bones, &c. Apply crushed bones and lime in abundance, and give good drainage. This treatment will enable the vines to defy the insect by the luxuriance of its growth.

Starving Orchards.

A ton of dry, unleached ashes per acre will furnish nearly the same ingredients advised by the *Scientific Farmer* for the fertilization of orchards, which is 200 to 250 pounds of bone dust, and 300 to 400 pounds of sulphate of potash per acre. This gives some 70 or 80 pounds of potash, 50 to 60 pounds of lime from the bones, and 10 to 20 pounds of nitrogen, and some magnesia in the potash and fertilizer, all of which are called for to nourish orchards on insufficient soil, as the flesh of most fruits contains much potash as well as lime, in combination with the fruity acids, and the seeds phosphoric acid. Whether the ingredients required are applied in the formula given or in the unleached ashes suggested, it is recommended to sow broadcast and lightly harrow in, leaving it to the rain to more thoroughly incorporate with the earth. Such treatment has proved successful in orchards showing signs of decay both in this country and Europe.

Coal ashes and salt are used with great benefit on some soils, especially in orchards bearing sour fruit. Orchards, the soil of which from close pasturage or other causes, is nearly destitute of humus, will gradually deteriorate and finally die unless restored to that state of fertility which is necessary for the thrifty growth of the tree and its existence in a healthy and vigorous state. Such orchards are greatly benefitted with a top-dressing of leaf mold, rotten chip manure, muck from a creek, broken bones, animal hair of all kinds, and similar material generally at hand on farms, which can be applied without other expense than the time and labor expended. When manures are used they should be well decomposed; fresh, warm manures excite young trees to a very rapid growth, but the wood is watery and feeble.