

The Farm.

Tree Planting and Mulching.

There is much diversity of opinion regarding tree planting, some advocating fall and some spring. In my own case, I have always leaned toward spring, provided I had but a short distance to transfer stock and was not hurried for time. But this is just the trouble. Spring is almost invariably a time of hurry, and distance often renders it necessary for stock to be out of the ground for days together. For this reason, fall planting is often desirable.

Most trees are at rest during a period beginning with the decay of leaves until some time in the winter. But in most cases roots start in the spring long before frost has left the ground. This renders fall, or very early spring, long-distance transplanting almost imperative.

But do not wait until it is too late in the fall for the tree or shrub to become established in its new quarters before freezing weather sets in. If not able to plant early, better wait and take the chances of spring. A tree planted in late September or early October will be well settled in its position before the ground freezes, and its roots will already be sending out fresh fibers in preparations for a vigorous start in early spring. The soil will become more solidly pressed against the roots, and the tree will have a far better chance of wintering well than one planted just before the ground freezes up. In the latter case it is impossible to tramp the soil in as firmly as when it settles itself, and unless carefully watched during the alternate freezings and thawings of winter, the tree becomes loose and sways about until there is a space between its roots and the soil and it is practically unplanted. The only remedy is a heavy mulching to keep frost from penetrating to the roots.

To do this there should be a thick covering of leaves, manure or straw sufficient to assure one that but little frost will get through. Or, if one is willing to remove it in the spring, common soil piled high around the tree will answer the purpose admirably. Indeed it is even better than ordinary material, for it keeps the tree firmly in place, so there is no disturbance of roots.

On this root protection depends much of the so-called hardness of a tree or shrub. A supposed half-hardy specimen will often prove hardy by being protected a few winters until its roots have become firmly established in the soil; and on the other hand, a perfectly hardy tree will sometimes succumb to a severe winter if carelessly handled.

It is not well to mulch the ground about the roots before severe frosts, as it might stimulate too early growth. December is soon enough for most plants, and in some cases it would be just as well to wait until the new year. Freezing is not so much to be feared as the alternate hot and cold spells of winter.

Small, half-hardy plants can be protected in the same manner as the fruit vines; that is, by being bent down and covered with enough soil to keep them in place. Hybrid perpetual roses and similar plants need no protection, save, perhaps, a slight mulching of manure. In sheltered places, if the winter be not unusually severe, even Teas, Bourbons, and like sorts will come through all right with a similar mulching.—Frank H. Sweet, in Independent.

Selecting the Pig.

In selecting the pig best suited for converting food into pork, there are several matters to be observed, and these should be paramount at the outset, as no after-care can compensate for errors of selection. Fineness of bone insures having but little offal, and a pig with fine bone seldom disappoints his owner when he is slaughtered. A broad, dished face, with snout short and turned up, indicates an aptitude to fatten, and is one of the surest indications of a good pig.

No hog should have bristles, as these have been bred away from all the best breeds, and they will not be tolerated at present on any respectable farm, as they

indicate coarseness, restlessness and proponderance of offal. Besides these outward indications, which include squareness of form, fineness of hair and depth and length of carcass, the propensities of the pig should be observed. He should not be a squealer, nor should he be restless. He should eat quietly, and after his appetite is appeased should patiently lie down without even travelling around the pen. As a rule the disposition of the pig and his propensities correspond to his form, and but few errors will be made if the selection of the pig is made as directed.

No corn should be fed till just previous to hardening the fat, and all heating or fat-producing food should be avoided as much as possible during the summer. A pig when in the pen will do well enough on vegetables, refuse, etc., if given a little bran and milk daily, as corn can do its duty later in the season.—(Tennessee Farmer.

Does it Pay to Hoe?

The use of the hand hoe has gone rapidly out of date in recent years. The idea is that all tillage should be given by horse power. The harrows, cultivators and weeders do splendid work. But I question whether we do well to discard the use of the hoe in some instances. When potatoes become too large for the weeder the only way to freshen the soil in the hill by horse power is to throw soil out of the middle into the hill. That forms a slight ridge. Another cultivation ridges the ground yet more, or else a crust is left about the plants. I believe that a thorough hand hoeing at this time, stirring all the surface of the soil about the plant and levelling the ridge slightly without cutting deep, pays well.

In many instances it would doubtless increase the yield sufficiently to pay very big wages to the workman. The hoe has been discarded on level lands, and a return to it might not seem progressive to many people, but the owner of clayey loams too often has a crust of hard soil about his plants at the last cultivation that should be broken, and the hand hoe is the only implement that can do the work right and leave the land reasonably level. I believe so strongly in the doctrine that thorough cultivation pays that each year I find more and more work for the hoe. The man that is skilled in its use can do much profitable work with it.—(David, in Farm and Fireside.

Neglected Heart-Chances.

A young man was sitting in the hotel office, looking dreamily and drearily out of the window. The clerk, who had nothing else to do just then, came and sat down by him, to "cheer him up" a little, for it is part of a good hotel man's business to keep his guests happy and contented, so they will stay longer.

"Thinking up some new scheme to make money, I'll be bound, Roberts," he ventured, looking quizzically at the youth. "Or about some new 'best girl.' Or—"

"Or on what a caricature on home even a first-class hotel like this is," interrupted the young man.

The clerk looked thoughtful. He knew by experience that the other was right. "You see," continued the guest, "I'd give five hundred dollars to go home and spend the night. I say five hundred dollars, because that's all I'm worth as yet." If it was ten thousand dollars, I'd give it, all the same.

"And I'm wondering why it was that I didn't stay there more when I could do it for nothing. Father and mother always used to say, 'You're going to stay home to-night, aren't you?' and I'd answer, 'Oh, no, I've got to go to—this, that, or the other. And then I'd be out maybe till midnight, or later, and act a little cross at breakfast in the morning.'"

"But, of course, no one can expect a young fellow to be tied at home all through the merriest time of life," answered the clerk.

"That's what father used to say," rejoined the guest. "When mother's eyes would moisten a little because I was going out, he would say laughingly, but I thought a little regretfully, 'We can't put old heads on young shoulders, wife.' And that was true. But the trouble is I did not realize that my head was going to get older so soon."

"Well, you say you'd give five hundred dollars to drop in there again," ventured the hotel clerk, who began to pity the young man to a degree entirely inconsis-

ent with the hotel's interests. "It won't cost you anywhere near that sum to go there. Why not pay 'the old folks' a visit?"

"Alas!" replied the young man, "there are now no 'old folks' and no home to visit. All are gone. And hundreds of times I could have done so easily what I would now give half of my life to do just once." And he rose and went out of the room.

"We must 'live and learn,' thought the hotel clerk, as he went back to his desk, "but the trouble is, we don't always learn soon enough."—Will Carleton, in Every-where.

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