

The second meeting of the Botanical Branch was held at the home of Mr. R. B. Whyte on Saturday evening, November 27th, 1909. There were present, in addition to the Chairman, Messrs. Geo. H. Clark, Groh, Michaud, Blackader, Attwood, Newman, Campbell, Prof. J. Macoun, W. T. Macoun.

There was no special subject for discussion, the arrangement being that each person present was to say something about what he had been doing during the summer. The discussion, however, proved so interesting that few men had an opportunity of telling of their work. Mr. Whyte told of what he was doing in raising seedling gooseberries. His object was to obtain a variety that would be as good, or better in quality, than any other, and which would be hardy and free from mildew. He showed specimens of a fine large seedling of the English gooseberry which he said was of very good quality. A discussion arose as to Mr. Whyte's methods, some claiming that there would be no marked increase in hardiness without the introduction of blood of a hardier gooseberry. The reason why the English gooseberries are susceptible to mildew in this country was thought by some of those present to be due to the fact that the English gooseberry was a native of a moist climate and when grown where the conditions were drier the leaves and fruit were affected by the mildew, as occasionally occurs in the drier parts of England. This brought out the interesting fact that some species of mildew thrive best in dry air, while some do best under moist conditions, as do the higher plants.

Mr. Michaud gave an interesting account of his work in the testing of vegetable seeds during the past summer. He found that, on the whole, seeds germinated better in diffused light than in total darkness. For instance, lettuce seed germinated better on the surface of blotting paper than between folds of this paper. The fact was brought out that in Nature most seeds germinate on the surface of the ground. As, however, it is impossible to control the conditions of moisture in the growing of crops outside it is necessary to plant the seeds in order to ensure their receiving sufficient moisture to germinate.

After Mr. Michaud had told of his germinating tests there was considerable discussion on the growth of plants and as to what proportion of the growth took place at night. One member claimed that there was more growth at night than in the daytime, but the general opinion was that this was not so. Growth takes place in darkness as well as in light, but elaboration of plant food takes place only in light. For instance, a potato may grow in a dark cellar by using up the food in the tubers which has been previously elaborated in the light.