

Vegetable Garden.

Spinach.

This useful vegetable should be found in every garden. It is of the most value early in the spring for early greens, and for this purpose should be sown in the autumn previous on the richest and best land. For spinach the soil cannot be too thoroughly worked and pulverized. It can be sown any time during the present month, the earlier the better. As the soil is at this time of the year apt to be rather dry, especial care should be taken to get the soil fine and mellow, and by bestowing a little labor the soil can be got into good condition without waiting for rain. The seed should be sown pretty thickly in rows about twelve inches apart, say about three seeds to the inch, and either press down or roll the seed rows. This is about ten times as many as are necessary, but it is very desirable to have sufficient plants, as it is both undesirable and annoying to have gaps in the rows. As soon as the plants appear hoe and cultivate between the rows, the oftener the better. When the plants are fairly started thin out, leaving them about four or five inches apart. Many fail in their first attempts to grow spinach in the autumn for spring use because they do not take sufficient pains to prepare the soil and neglect to sow seed enough, or if the weather is dry neglect to roll or press the seed down. Just before winter sets in it is desirable to scatter a thin layer of straw or litter over the plants, say three inches, as protection. The Round Leaf is the most popular kind, and will stand the winter well; although the Prickly is said to be hardier, we have never found it so; but the latter is not near so prolific as the Round Leaf. After the spinach is cleared off the following spring the land is available for other crops. Lettuce for early spring can be grown in a similar manner. The White Cabbage is a good variety, and stands the winter well. A few boards placed on edge round the bed will be useful as additional protection.

Plants for Next Spring.

Those who are not versed in the ways of market-gardeners, are not aware that the seeds for the early crop of cabbages, cauliflowers, and lettuce, are sown in autumn. The plants, protected through the winter in cold frames, are set out very early the following spring. It is useless for one to expect to have these vegetables early in the market, unless he adopts the method that years of experience has shown to be the safe one. The seeds are sown in autumn in the open ground; the young plants, grown to the proper size, are planted out in cold frames, where they are kept dormant, and at the same time protected from severe changes of temperature. They are set out very early the following spring. The time for sowing the seeds to produce plants which are to be wintered, is of great importance. If sown too soon, the plants will be too large, and if too late, they will not be strong enough. After a long experience in the climate of New York, Mr. Peter Henderson has found it safest to sow twice. Once on the twelfth and again on the sixteenth of September, and would prefer to sow later than the last named date, rather than earlier. Of course the time of sowing must vary with each locality, the object being to have strong plants, ready for the cold frames, in four or five weeks after the seeds are sown. Farmers and others, who wish to have the earliest cabbages for market, should adopt this method. Sow the seeds this month; pick out the young plants next month into cold frames, and keep them dormant through the winter, until they can be set out next spring.

Planting Onions in Autumn.

It is much better to plant onion sets in the fall than to wait until spring. Aside from the gain of time by doing it in autumn, the risk of keeping them in good condition is avoided. They should not be planted until next month, or until so late that the tops will not start into growth. At this season the soil is warm and mellow, and the work can be done with much more comfort than in spring. The sets will commence their growth very early, and be much in advance of those planted in spring. Those who wish to raise their own onion seed, should select the bulbs and plant them out in autumn, taking care to cover them with at least three inches of soil.

Asparagus Culture.

As the ground for asparagus should be prepared in the fall, and the seed may be sown then as well as in the spring, an article on its culture will be timely and may prove interesting to your readers.

For asparagus the soil must be deeply stirred. It is the better plan to trench in the fall, throwing the ground up into high ridges. When the ground is put in this condition the frost will disintegrate and pulverize it during the winter. In fixing the seed bed a fork must be used, as a rake will not penetrate deeply enough. Forking brings up from below fresh dirt to be exposed to the action of the atmosphere. If the ground is frequently forked over before the seed is planted, it is all the better. The ground should be well manured with good compost manure. Asparagus requires a rich soil. The bed should also be treated to a liberal application of salt.

The beds should be made four feet wide, with two rows of plants to each bed. The alleys between the beds should be two or three feet wide. As the asparagus is a native of cold climates, flourishing in the maritime portions of Russia where the soil is deeply impregnated with salt, the seed may be sown in the fall, on some well manured spot. The seeds are small, and one ounce will produce about one thousand plants. The seeds may be sown in drills nine or ten inches apart. When the plants are well up the space between the hills should be frequently stirred and kept free of weeds. When the plants should be transplanted, or whether it is necessary to transplant them at all, are questions far from being decided. Some gardeners keep the plants in the seed bed till they are two years old, others plant them out the second year, while still others sow the seed in the beds where the plants are to stand, and all have attained excellent results. It seems probable that success depends principally upon the preparation of the soil.

In the growing beds the plants should be placed in drills two feet apart and one foot apart in the drills. As before remarked, some gardeners prefer to sow the seed spaced as above, claiming that in this way they can raise better, or at least as good, crops as are produced by the old method, and at the same time save the labor of transplanting. Some pile up a heavy covering of rich soil early in the spring, and the plants growing up through this, form the toothsome white stems of the market. But the plan which I would recommend to your readers is to protect the beds during the winter and early spring months with a heavy covering of manure; break this up and fork it in before the plants come up in the spring, adding some fresh soil, and thus raising the bed to a moderate height above the roots. This treatment will insure strong and succulent stems, of a natural green color and superior flavor. Great care is necessary when forking in the manure in the spring not to damage the crowns of the plants by the operation.

It will require three years from the time of planting for the plants to produce sufficient buds and large enough for general use. The safest mode of cutting is to slip the knife down perpendicularly close to each shoot and cut it off slantingly three or four inches below the surface, taking care not to injure any of the young shoots that are coming up from the same stool. The bed will prove productive for many years, but it is better to make them anew every five or six years. Change the location of the bed each time. The old bed, being deep and rich, will produce large crops of vegetables.—[Farmers' Call.

The toad is very helpful to the husbandman as a destroyer of injurious insects, on which he chiefly feeds. Toads have a curious net-like lasso, which they throw out so quickly to trap insects that a fly is not sufficiently agile to escape. Boys, spare the harmless and useful toads, and the dear little birds that subsist on insects which destroy our fruit and grain. The President of the Farmers' Club of the American Institute, who owns a farm worth \$60,000 in Connecticut, once stated to the Club that he was accustomed to pay fifty cents each for toads, which were put on his farm to destroy insects. He places small pieces of boards over little depressions in the garden and about the yard, as refuges for useful toads.

Some kinds of garden seeds—as melon, beets and mangels—are good for a number of years if well kept through the summer in a cool, dry place. But the bulk of very small garden seeds are unsafe after the first year, and had better be thrown away than sown.

Poultry.

Poultry Plums.

BY R. A. BROWNE.

Some people have special aptitude for rearing poultry at a profit, and some at a loss, or at least make it pay badly; as some farmers are *lucky* with their horses, cattle, sheep and pigs, while others are constantly grumbling at their *ill luck*. To my way of thinking, the success depends on the knowledge and the care and labor bestowed. Sometimes there are instances where unforeseen events happen that may overtake the most careful and wise, and some of these are sickness, parasites, and theft. There is no breed of fowls that will lay and be a profit to their owner by the way of increasing in size and flesh, if afflicted with the two former mishaps. The first will soon make itself known if any sort of care is bestowed at all; but the second may be a source of annoyance for months without the uncautious knowing of their presence. The very worst of all those parasites that fowls are heir to, are the Hen Spider Lice. They are so small that multitudes of them may crawl over one's hands and yet not know of their presence. Their color is grey, but when filled with blood they are red. Look beneath the roost poles and about the crevices; they may be seen in little groups. As soon as touched, or annoyed, they move rapidly in all directions, so when the fowls get on the roost at night they crawl up on their bodies and sap their very life away so quietly that their presence is not even suspected. The first evidence is, the fowls move to new roostings, and so from place to place; their feathers become pale and faded looking; their combs become pale and shriveled. Then they cease laying, notwithstanding the amount of good wholesome food and free access to good pure water. To get rid of these pests, get plenty of unslaked lime, put it in a bucket, and fill with water; then take a brush or an old broom and completely cover every object movable and immovable inside the poultry house with hot lime wash. Do not leave even a nail head unwashed, or you leave enough seed to make all your work of no purpose and to give future annoyance. Now, as fall is upon us, is the time to fight every foe, when they may be the easiest removed. Be sure and burn the old roost poles and get fresh ones. Take every hen and dust with insect powder; dust your fowls all through their feathers. Feed some sulphur amongst their food once a day for three days; then apply some coal oil to their legs, and better give them, if possible, a new roosting abode for a week, when the white-washing should be gone over again; even the floor and ceiling all require the white, hot liquid in unsparing doses. Just put it on in pails full, and you will find your feed saved by pails full. Make your work complete, and as your hens are now going in to moult, you will have the satisfaction of seeing them come safely through. Neglect to attend to the wants of your fowls, more particularly at this time of year, and moulting will surely result in failure.

Perhaps there is no kind of stock kept on a farm that are so forced to shift for themselves as fowls. Other animals are estimated at so many dollars, but fowls considered a necessary evil, when the fact is, there is no stock kept on the farm that will pay so well according to money invested in both stock and the food given them.

After you have your fowl house and fowls supposed to be clean, with new roost poles, get some old coarse cloth and wrap all round the roosts, and keep the cloth well saturated with coal oil for this winter, and when spring comes you will find yourself amply repaid for the trouble and expense by having a surplus of eggs, healthier fowls, and brighter and fresher looking feathers. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well, and if poultry are not worth keeping clean, do not keep them at all. If you think it proper to keep your cow house or horse stable clean every day, when they are housed, then why not clean after the poultry, even once a week or oftener, for their droppings are more offensive than either of cows or horses, and should be more looked after? When we go into the several outbuildings of so many different people, and see the slipshod way their poultry are kept and looked after, we often wonder that there are any left to live—droppings left from year to year, lice, filth and feathers in great profusion.

Once more the show season is with us. It looms up with interest, and poultrymen, whether mechanics or farmers, alike will be earnestly engaged