



NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

This department of The Guide is maintained especially for the purpose of providing a discussion ground for the readers where they may freely exchange views and derive from each other the benefits of experience and helpful suggestions. Each correspondent should remember that there are hundreds who wish to discuss a problem or offer suggestions. We cannot publish all the immense number of letters received, and ask that each correspondent will keep his letter as short as possible. Every letter must be signed by the name of the writer, though not necessarily for publication. The views of our correspondents are not of necessity those of The Guide. The aim is to make this department of great value to readers, and no letters not of public interest will be published.

PLEASURES OF GARDENING

Editor, Guide:—The appeal you make to your readers to make and prepare their gardens is certainly highly commendable, and if carried out would do much to make our town and country gardens and districts attractive and home-like. A house without a garden, or a man without some love of flowers and shrubs and flowering trees, are two of the most soulless objects to be met with in this pastoral country. Very considerably more can be achieved in the upbuild of a young town and its immediate surroundings by a closer observation of the beautiful than by the stale processes of so called boosting a town, which everybody reads with shy suspicion. There are at the present time scores of towns and districts lavishly advertised as the very best districts in which to locate, but do they keep clean and attractive houses to welcome their guests if they should make it their choice? The experimental farms have done handsomely in trying to bring about this most desirable consummation by the distribution of literature, seeds and plants, and, best of all, the most reliable advice and instructions. The result being that many flowering shrubs and plants may now be seen throughout the country, including lilacs, gunnalian maples, hollyhocks, stocks, caraganas, columbine, larkspur and poppies, which please the eye and provoke admiration. One of the first things the new comer notices on arrival to Canada is the painful absence of well kept gardens. On the other hand, among the first things noticed on a visit to the old land are the number of beautiful well kept and productive gardens. Great encouragement is given in the old country by giving prizes for the most perfect specimen of different flowers and vegetables. What little hamlet has not its annual and periodical flower, fruit and vegetable show, and oh! the ambition to carry home to mother and the little ones that bright copper kettle or fat turkey. The railway companies, too, offer every inducement to the small rural stations by offering prizes for the most attractive and prettiest approaches to the station, among the cherished memories of the old land across the sea are the raised banks of neatly trimmed grass, with the names of the stations outlined with daisies, pansies, alyssum, and lobelia, in subdued and even growth. These are things which are sadly neglected in this beautiful Canada, which has far more advantages and possibilities, with its vast areas, than the old country, with its cramped, limited and dearer land. The vegetable garden is not only commendable for its usefulness and from its economic point of view, but also gives the home a clean appearance, for one of the first things a man does who loves his garden is to make his place tidy by burning all superfluous rubbish and thereby also providing quickly assimilated material for the young plants and ensuring a good crop for use in winter. Select the best piece of land you have, land of the medium texture is easiest worked and allows the young plant roots to penetrate the soil in search of nourishment. Plow your land fairly deep with the furrows dipping with the lean of the land. This prevents water lying after heavy rains. Select your site if possible leaning a little to the north and protected on the west by trees or shrubs. This prevents too quick drying out of the soil and also protects your crops from the winds. Avoid raised beds or ridges, as this exposes too large an area to the scorching sun and winds.

Plunder the winter of at least one month and add it to the summer. This can be done by making a hot bed, an old piano box is a handy thing for this purpose and requires no skill, simply wheel 10 to 12 barrow loads of stable manure, fresh, and dump into your box, trample well down, then cover with 4 or 5 inches of good soil. When the rank heat has passed away and the temperature reduced to about 85° or 90° Fahrenheit, plant your seeds in small boxes that can be easily carried to your beds. Keep your hot bed well ventilated on fine days and close up at night. In the garden plant round smooth oily seeds, such as radish, cabbages, turnips, about one inch deep, as these have a tendency to wiggle down into the soil when raking, which is the reverse with beets, parsnips, and carrots. These have a tendency to rise on account of their rough surfaces and corners, and should be planted half an inch deeper, and last, but equally important, as your crop depends upon it, declare continuous and relentless war against weeds and insect pests. These are the gardener's greatest and most vigilant foes. A close observation of these few simple rules and your garden will show its gratitude and you will have cause for gratitude when you gather in your harvest, day by day, of crisp sweet lettuce, radishes, onions and cress, and gladden the hearts of mother and the little ones, and stock your cellar for winter use. In selecting your seeds let them be clean, bright and uniform and very plump. Potatoes should be a uniform, medium size, clean skinned and free from worm holes and scab, shallow eyes and perfectly white and round showing good strong sprouts with the basis of the shoots inclined to be purple. This indicates good constitution. Cut into pieces, each having two sprouts or not more than three. Setting aside when harvesting the roots gives best yield for succeeding crops.

CRITICUS.

Dauphin.

WHEAT RAISING

Editor, Guide:—I want to talk about wheat-raising. We have been often told that there is nothing new under the sun, but I hope to throw some new light on an old subject. Please pardon me if my preamble seems lengthy and irrelevant.

Several years ago I lived in a small town in that part of Minnesota to which Bishop Ireland took his colonists. One of those colonists had left in the public library—as a sort of memorial of himself—his books. The man was Ignatius Donnelly. I happened at the time to be pondering over that theory of Darwin's that the female always shows a preference and protests vigorously against any violation of her right, while the male is always responsive, when a remark of Donnelly's attracted my attention and refused to be dissociated with this theory of Darwin's. It was something like this: that we can never tell where man may have stepped in, and disarranged the plans of nature. Taking my cue from this I began to arrange all the facts I knew, or could learn of nature, both animal and vegetable, into a broad scheme under two general classes, those which were under the original plan of nature and those which showed evidence of man's interference. The conclusions are something like this:

Those animals which are under the original plan, mate (pair) for life, the female choosing her mate. The males

never fight, neither parent destroys the young. They are never subject to disease or epidemics of any kind, nor pests such as lice, ticks, etc., and seldom sought their food among the domestic products of man, and that the winged animals and plants are subject to the same rules as near as may be. That those animals which were not under this plan of pairing purely for life showed evidence of man's having "butted in" at some stage of their existence. There were several females to one male. The males fight and even kill each other, go in bands or herds, kill their young occasionally, destroy domestic products, have great fear of man, and show great cunning in circumventing and avoiding him. Are subject to pests, epidemics and diseases. That "winged animals" and plants are subject to these same rules as near as may be.

Let us leave this for a moment and look at it from another point of view. Those men who make use of hybridizing to obtain new varieties select the flower which they wish to use as the female or mother-flower, and cut out those organs which contain the pollen or male element, and substitute pollen from some plant of their own choosing. They then cover the flower so that the pollen from no other flower can get in because they know, whether they have stopped to put it in words or not, that the female flower prefers to do her own choosing of pollen, that she will take the pollen the hybridizer has provided her with, only because she can get no other. Now we are not hybridizers, but we are all trying to raise pure strains of grains. In other words we are restricting the pollen the female must receive to kinds of our own choosing, by surrounding her with grain plants like herself. She has no choice. We are very careful to avoid seed of another variety knowing how readily they mix; yet this is just what nature wants us to do. What, mix our grains? Yes mix them in the seed bins, in the drill, the more the better, or smut, rust, bluestone, formaline, small yields, sickly grains, the prey to every adverse weather condition, whether wet, drought or frost.

E. W. WILLIAMS.

Marcelin, Sask.

RE DIRECT LEGISLATION

Editor, Guide:—I notice in your issue of March 6, that Mr. Dixon in a mild way tries to put statements into my mouth that I never said, as follows: That sometimes the majority rule is alright, and refers to action of Chauvin Union on Direct Legislation. I would like to point out to him that what I said was that it was defeated by the Chauvin delegates by a majority of those present. He tells now that when the excitement created by the politicians has subsided seventy-five per cent. of the people of Canada would vote for Reciprocity. May God grant you are all right for then there is hope yet for Canada. But, sir, in admitting the above, you give to the opponents of Direct Legislation a strong point to use against it. How will you guarantee to the people under Direct Legislation that the majority will not be swayed by prejudices, by the nasty politicians and spell-binders. The history of the world shows many instances where popular clamour has driven nations to war and other crimes. President Taft and other great leaders of thought have condemned Direct Legislation. Take the vote of the people of Manitoba on Reciprocity. A measure that would undoubtedly benefit them if anybody. Thousands voted against it. Will you give us some sane cause for this? How will you guarantee in the future when some good measure is before them that they will vote any more intelligently on it than they have done in the past. Make up your mind, dear friend, at next election to do your duty at the primaries and see that good men are sent to the various conventions to select the best to represent us and we won't need those fads. I won't admit for one that we cannot find in this part of Canada honest men to represent us. It is a terrible indictment for any locality if they cannot produce an honest leader. If such is the case how can you trust the locality as a whole. 'Nuff said. The farmers may lack education but not a fair amount of horse-sense.

AUSTIN DRONEY.

Holden.

RESTRICTING COMPETITION

Editor, Guide:—What are the western jobbers trying to do to the farmers and

others? Instead of trying to see how small lots and how varied they can get shipped at car rate, they now have application before the Railway Commission to make the amounts larger and all of the same commodity before they can get car rate on shipments, as for instance we used to be able to get 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th class goods all into a car of groceries and now they are trying to make it all canned goods, or all cereals, or all woodenware, or all biscuits, before it will take car rates. Consequently the western dealers are compelled to deal with the local jobbers without competition from outsiders whatever. Then if they (the retailers) pay more, the consumers must still pay more as the retailers' profit is put on his cost, not on the worth of the article. This is a very serious question at present for the west if they only thought so. It is the same to the western merchants as the defeat of Reciprocity was to the western farmers.

ALEX. B. HUDSON.

Manager of The Peoples' Supply Co. Store.
Lumsden. A Farmers Store.

GOVERNMENT SEED OATS

Editor, Guide:—I wonder if many of your readers have had a similar experience to mine with seed oats supplied by the government. The oats supplied to me besides being a very poor sample, in fact only feed oats, are full of wild oats, buckwheat, etc., and totally unfit to sow. I regret now I did not open a bag at the station and refuse to accept them. If one sowed such seed as likely as not a weed inspector would come along and order the crop plowed under. I call it simply disgraceful, as with the facilities at their disposal nothing but the very best should have been supplied, especially at the price charged. I suppose its just a case of graft and somebody has got a rake off. I am sending you a sample. I shall be glad if you would take the matter up in your paper.

E. CHAS. F. MURRELL.

Mannville, Alta.

Note.—The sample enclosed was certainly not fit for seed.—Ed.

FREE TRADE FARMING

Editor, Guide:—Mr. A. Coleman says "Free Trade has crushed the farmer in England." Is he sure? Most of my old country friends are farmers and I have yet to hear of any such fate coming to any one of them. When last I was among them they gave no evidence of being crushed, not even pinched. All of them so far as I know continue to live in commodious, well furnished houses and to wear good, well made clothes, and to enjoy many things that are undreamt of in this land of promise. I chance to have a relative on the same farm that my great grandfather occupied a hundred years ago in the blissful days of protection. My protected grandfather, poor old chap, made a living that my unprotected relative would turn his nose up at. Yet this relative, cursed as he is with Free Trade, pays more rent and more wages per head than the old man blessed with protection. And he manages to live a life of comfort, even of luxury, and to send his children to college, whereas his fortunate ancestor lived the life of a drudge and turned his children into the fields. Another relative died six years ago, leaving a fortune of 50,000 dollars all made out of free trade farming. Still another relative there who spent seven years in this golden west and who, notwithstanding an offer of free land to him as a South African veteran, chose to try free trade farming at which he is doing well. Beyond this I could give numerous cases where men now only in their prime are doing well in free trade farming, and who started without a cent of capital. If Mr. Coleman would prefer more scientific proof as to the state of farming in England I simply refer him to the price of farm lands now current. Where land of moderate quality and farthest from populous centres brings 150 dollars an acre it cannot be said that farming is crushed. If all other English laws that touch the farmer had been so beneficial to him as the Free Trade enactment he would have been the happiest man in the Empire. As it is I know few who are as happy as the English Farmer, and, sir, I know the English Farmer.

T.W.B.

Manitoba.