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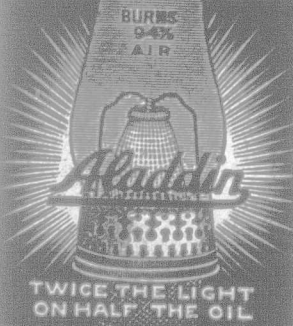
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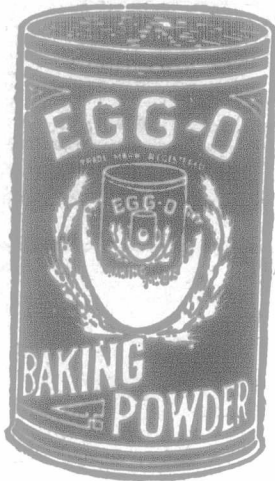
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**Our School Department.**

**School Garden Suggestions.**

BY GEO. S. JOHNSON, B.A., WHITBY HIGH SCHOOL.

This is the season of the year when the teachers of agriculture are beginning to make plans for their school garden, and I would like to pass on a few suggestions that have found favor among the teachers of the inspectorate of South Ontario County.

In the regulations the suggestion is that the school garden be of a certain size, and tradition has it that this garden shall be planted with vegetables and flowers. This is a simple way of getting around the school garden proposition, and too many are always ready to take the easiest method of conforming to the regulations as set down in the blue book. Any teacher can do what has been done in other centres, but it is the exceptional teacher, the teacher with initiative, that will formulate her own plans and get away from the beaten path.

The school garden has, in the past, meant a small patch of land in one corner of the school grounds, and often this little patch has been splendidly kept, and has reflected credit to the teacher and pupils concerned. But with this idea of a school garden I think that we have been acting upon a too narrow viewpoint. To my mind the school garden should begin at the school gate and should take in the whole of the school grounds, the lawn, the trees, the shrubbery, as well as the plot of vegetables and the flower beds. The school grounds should present a model for the school district to copy.

If nothing has ever been done along the line of beautifying the school grounds plans should be laid now. It may be that the teacher does not wish to undertake the responsibility of making planting plans. If this is the case the Horticultural Department of the O.A.C., stands ready to give any assistance in their power along this line. I have before me a letter from this Department in which they state that if the teacher will send in an outline of the school grounds with certain data marked they will be pleased to give all details as to the location of plots, and the best varieties for planting. When we consider that a portion, if not all, of this improvement will be paid for out of the agricultural grant to the school, we will realize what a wonderful opportunity there is for the schools to make their grounds among the beauty spots of rural Ontario.

In order to further this idea it is proposed to offer prizes for the most beautiful school grounds in this inspectorate. The prizes of, say, \$25.00, \$15.00 and \$10.00 will be sufficient to warrant a little extra effort along this line. This will necessitate several inspections at different times during the season, but we believe that the time will be well spent and will ultimately result in the best kept and most beautiful school grounds of any part of the Province.

**THE GARDEN.**

As mentioned above the school garden too often is planted with the regulation carrots, beets, beans, corn, etc. This is all right as far as it goes, and we do not intend for a moment to belittle this part of the garden, but it does not go far enough.

Small fruits are seldom grown in the school garden, and for this there are several excuses offered. One of the most common excuses is that the children will pick the berries as soon as they are formed. If the school gardens were operated for commercial purposes then this excuse would have some force, but fortunately this is not the case. The school garden should be the laboratory or work shop of the agricultural classes of the school, and should be used as such.

Each school garden should have a section set apart for small fruits. There should be currants, raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries, strawberries, and, where practicable, grapes. The bushes here will furnish splendid material for the class work on propagation, pruning, the study of the flowers and how they develop into the fruit.

The varieties of the different fruits for this section should not be selected at haphazard. Care should be taken to choose only the best varieties of each

fruit, and in this way the plot may be used as a demonstration plot for the school district as well as for the practical work of the class. In too many of the home gardens the berries grown are of inferior varieties. The berry patch, in all probability, has been in existence for a long time, and no attention has been paid to the introduction of new varieties.

Considerable attention should be given to the propagation of the bushes. If the school garden is of sufficient size, set apart a portion of it for a nursery and make cuttings from the various varieties, set them out, and when of sufficient size distribute them among the pupils. Of course, this is not the most rapid method of introducing the new varieties into the neighborhood, but if the children do the work of making the cuttings and the work in the nursery the new plants that they take home will mean many times more to them than if they had purchased them direct from some large nursery.

**Judging Potatoes.**

If potatoes were fed exclusively to live stock, farmers would not need to worry much about the quality of the tuber produced—the yield would be the main thing to consider. Such, however, is not the case. Consumers of potatoes are very particular. Hotels, restaurants, and other public eating establishments must have good potatoes, and the people who live in towns and cities don't care to pay good money for poor products. They like to have potatoes all one size so they will cook evenly; they don't like large, rough potatoes for then there is much waste, and above all they want them of good quality.

Where school lunches are served an interesting lesson on potatoes could be carried on during the noon hour, and if teacher or pupils should desire all the latest information on potatoes they could obtain it from Justus Miller, Parliament Buildings, Toronto; from Dr. C. A. Zavitz, O. A. C., Guelph, Ont.; from Provincial Departments of Agriculture, or from the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. From these sources bulletins and other literature may be procured telling all about potatoes.

In brief, the trade in Ontario calls for a white, mealy, flaky potato of good flavor and of good appearance. The tuber should be smooth; deep eyes are objectionable. When potatoes are tested at the O. A. C., the following score card is used to compare them. The tubers are steamed or cooked and then judged according to the following points:

Mealiness.....	40 points
Flavor.....	40 points
Appearance.....	20 points
Total.....	100 points

It would not be a difficult task to cook potatoes at the school and carry on a little judging contest during the lunch hour. Several samples of potatoes could be brought by the pupils and used for the lesson.

The following scale of points may be used in judging potatoes in large or small lots, when the cooking process is not resorted to:

Purity of variety.....	10 points
Uniformity.....	10 "
Size.....	10 "
Smoothness.....	10 "
Shape.....	5 "
Nature of Skin.....	5 "
Color.....	10 "
Freedom from Disease.....	15 "
Quality.....	25 "
Total.....	100 points

When small patches or whole fields of potatoes are being judged, the following scale of points is frequently used:

General Appearance.....	15 points
Freedom from blight and insects.....	17 "
Method and Thoroughness of Cultivation.....	20 "
Purity of Variety.....	10 "
Apparent Yield.....	38 "
Total.....	100 points