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The Month.



NOVEMBER

is a month of very uncertain character in this climate. It is hard to say how it will behave. Sometimes it begins with a rough cold snap that startles us into a conviction that winter does really mean to come again, and, as if to make amends for its rough behaviour at the outset, closes with that delightful reminder of a departed season which we call "Indian Summer." Or this order is reversed, in which case summer in pretence begins the month, and winter in earnest closes it. The well-known March proverb is not inapplicable to November. If it come in like a lamb it will go out like a lion, and *vice versa*.

The mean temperatures for this month are as follows:—

Stratford	36° 75'
Hamilton	39° 76'
Barrie	37° 99'
Toronto	38° 36'
Bellefille	38° 82'
Montreal	34° 76'
Quebec	35° 50'
St. John, N.E.	37° 40'
Halifax	38° 00'

"Preparation for winter" may be written as the motto and watchword for November. It is to be presumed that the potatoes are all dug and housed either in cellars or pits. We are liable to have frosts about the first of November, severe enough to do great damage to potatoes. If any are left in the ground at so late a date as this, by all means let them be got out of it forthwith, if Jack Frost is not playing jailer with them.

All the root crops should be taken care of at once: carrots, beets, mangolds, and turnips. Carrots are beginning to be raised more extensively, chiefly as winter food for horses, and they are very valuable for this purpose. But they are equally good for other animals. Boiled and mixed with meal they are excellent for fattening hogs. Mangolds may be alternated with turnips in feeding cattle.

Thus used for milch cows, they correct the turnip flavour which is apt to be given to the milk by the exclusive use of turnips. But mangolds are especially useful toward the close of winter, and by their peculiar qualities, are an excellent preparation for turning out to grass. In taking up turnips, the best plan is to remove the tops before lifting the roots. This can be done most expeditiously by means of a sharp hoe. Care must be had not to cut a slice off the turnip along with the top. The tops may either be fed to cattle or ploughed in. We prefer the latter course, chiefly because the tops are a rather too unsubstantial and loosening diet to be a good preparation for winter, while they are an excellent green manure. Some farmers are in the habit of tearing their turnips out of the ground with harrows. We do not commend this practice. It cuts up and wounds the bulbs considerably. A light tool, somewhat like a pick, made for the purpose, does the work much more satisfactorily, and the process is not so slow as might be imagined. One of the best farmers we know, who usually raises about twenty acres of turnips each year, pursues this plan in preference to all others. The most convenient way of storing them for the winter is in a root-house close to the cattle stabling, but they will keep well in pits. Care must be taken to provide ventilation, and to avoid the extremes of warmth and cold. Turnips keep best just above the freezing point.

All animals should be well housed this month. Nothing is more unprofitable than to let stock suffer inconvenience from the cold. It is a great waste of feed, for shivering animals eat voraciously, and after all their food does them far less good than if they were kept comfortable. It is especially bad policy to let young stock suffer exposure. Keep them warm and they will improve in flesh, appearance and constitution. No prize animal was ever produced by being treated to a straw stack for both shelter and food. Colts will show the effect of care and good stabling more decidedly perhaps than any other description of young stock. It is a total mistake to suppose that exposure makes them hardy. Shelter, good food, ventilation and exercise, are what impart toughness of muscle and power of endurance. Fattening hogs should be well housed in good season, and got ready for market by settled cold weather. Better prices usually prevail early in the season, before the market is glutted with pork. Poultry intended for the table or market should be cooped, and fed with scalded meal, and the like. The addition of a little suet will hasten the fattening process, especially in the case of geese and ducks. The practice of converting poultry into food without preliminary fattening is to be reprehended quite as much as the practice of slaughtering lean beef, mutton or pork.

Manure-making is an important November job

Collect stores of muck, leaves, dry tan bark, sawdust, and any sort of litter that can be used as an absorbent, that all the droppings, both liquid and solid, may be secured. "Waste not, want not." The yards should be cleaned now and then, the manure thrown up loosely into heaps, and coated with muck or soil. The value of manure depends largely on the food eaten by the animals; the richer the food the better the manure. A large proportion of the food of well-fed animals finds its way into the manure, and hence that made from fattening animals is of the greatest value. Hogs are the best fed of any animals on the farm, and next to night soil, hog manure is the richest of fertilizers.

Until frost comes, the plough should be kept going upon land meant for spring crops. All soils are benefited by exposure to the action of frost in a loose condition, clay soils particularly. Many a tough, unpromising soil in the fall, has become loose, friable, and pleasant to work by spring, under the influence of alternate freezing and thawing.

It has been well observed that "there may be great slaughter of biennial weeds this month with a 'spud.' Every coarse-leaved flat-growing plant in the meadows and pastures (and many that have fine leaves in close bunches), and green at this time, are plants that make root one year and bloom the next. Cutting an inch or two below the surface is fatal to most of them, and damaging to all."

Orchard and garden work the present month also comes principally under the head of preparation for winter. Some recommend planting fruit trees as late in the season as it can be done without danger from a too cold and frosty air, which is apt to injure the roots. We prefer to heel in the trees now, and wait for a favourable time to plant in early spring. The orchard may be top-dressed with manure to advantage the present month. Some are absurd enough to expect continuous crops of fruit without enriching the ground in which the trees grow; but fruit is like everything else, it must be cultivated and manured if it is to yield satisfactorily. Where field mice abound, it is necessary to bank up young fruit trees with soil ten or twelve inches high, making the surface firm and smooth, to prevent them from girdling the trees—a favourite trick with them. It is well to spade or plough gardens late in the fall. Some recommend pruning grape vines before winter sets in, others advise delay until just before the sap begins to flow in early spring. Grapes and raspberries are best laid prostrate, and even covered with an inch or two of soil before winter. A loose covering of cornstalks, straw, litter, or leaves, is advisable in the case of strawberry beds. Tender bulbs should be lifted and put in the cellar, if that has not already been done. In short, everything animal or vegetable, that requires winter quarters, must without further delay go into them.