

## NOTES ON EGG PLANTS.



THE egg plant is one of the important vegetables, which has as yet received little attention in this State, and the poor withered specimens sent in from other States give consumers little idea of the delicious character of this plant when fresh and well served. No doubt also, the fact that it is not common, and that cooks are not accustomed to serving it, may account to a large extent for its neglect.

The egg plant is a native of tropical America, and reaches perfection only in a warm climate and near the coast. By careful treatment, however, and by a process of acclimatization, it may be successfully grown far inland and much farther north than commonly attempted, as the successful plantings in the college gardens for the past two years abundantly prove.

The following notes embrace the more important results of our experiences with this plant during the past five years:

1. *Culture*.—As a long season is required for the egg plant to mature, it is highly important that the plants be started early. It is our practise to sow the seeds in "flats"—shallow boxes about three inches deep—in a warm forcing house about the middle of March or the first of April. After about a month, or when the first true leaves are nicely started, the young plants are pricked off into other boxes, two inches apart each way, or better, into two-inch pots. About three weeks later, when the pots are well filled with roots, or when the plants begin to crowd, the latter should be shifted to four-inch pots. We have almost invariably had better success when the plants were handled in pots than when they were transplanted into other flats, the check caused by frequent disturbance of the roots appearing to be detrimental to most sorts. An exception is noted, however, in case of the Early Dwarf Purple which seems able to withstand very harsh treatment. It is important that the plants be kept growing vigorously from the start, as they seldom fully recover from a check, and in order that fruit mature the plants must be strong and vigorous when planted in the field.

The plants may be set in the field, in this latitude, about June 10th to 15th. We usually set them in rows about three feet apart that they may be cultivated by horse power. The soil should be a rich sandy loam containing an abundance of organic matter. Heavy dressings of stable manure are advisable. Frequent and thorough cultivation are absolutely essential to success.

Perhaps the worst insect enemy of the egg plant is the potato beetle. The tender foliage of the young plants is especially subject to attack, and as the growth is so slow, severe injury nearly always proves fatal. Paris green, one pound to one hundred gallons of water (about one-half teaspoonful to a large pailful of water), applied about once a week, will be found useful.