

a hill, and a good many of the sets out to two or three eyes and one piece in a place. As I make the hill three feet apart each way, a failure of a hill makes a considerable gap. Rainy weather coming on, I set my hired men at work, giving them instructions to cut as nearly in the prescribed way as possible. As a result, I am getting two, and sometimes three good eyes on a set, and all of these I shall plant with only one piece in a place. But I do insist, and this point I think is gained, that the eyes shall all be cut deeply towards the stem end. I do not roll in plaster this year, as I doubt whether there is any advantage in it while the weather is so moist as it has been the last two weeks. In a very dry time plaster is sometimes helpful; but I do not apply it to cut potatoes for the purpose of drying up the juices. I want to have them partially dried at least before planting, and this is the best done by spreading thinly on racks with slats, which in the fall are used for drying apples. A few hours' drying on this fits them to spread on the floor in the barns, but still thinly so as not to endanger heating.

Is land plaster of any use in the soil, or on its bare surface? I have found it helpful dusted on the leaves of potatoes as soon as the plants are up, but what falls on the soil is, I think, wasted. (1) It has little or no manurial value on my land, for it already contains enough lime; but it does, under favorable conditions, stimulate the growth of leaves. This, with potatoes, is what we first seek. It is very rare that a strong, stocky growth of potato vines is not accompanied by a good crop of the tubers; hence I use plaster on potatoes before the vines are large enough to bear a dose of Paris green. In this way the leaves get two and sometimes three dustings with plaster, but I believe each one helps the crop more than the cost of labor, plaster and poison combined.

Owing in part to the rainy weather the latter part of May, I am planting potatoes this year later than ever before; so also are the farmers in this neighborhood. I do not regard this as any disadvantage. Despite the severe drouth late in the season last year, the best potatoes in the neighborhood were planted June 17th, and in another town a large crop was grown planted June 22d. It is impossible to get potatoes started early enough so that the crop will form before the hottest weather of midsummer, and as the potato loves cool, moist weather, the better way is to have the tubers form after most of the hot weather has passed. Either very early or very late is, I think, better than the medium time in which the bulk of the potato crop is planted. This year, in Western New-York, heavy rains fell at the time when most farmers want to have their potatoes planted, and all will be put in later than usual.

The chief and only difficulty in late planting is in keeping the seed potatoes in good condition. If left in the cellar until sprouts are a foot long, it is almost impossible to get a good crop. It is no trouble to keep potatoes even to the first of July in good planting order. All that is needed is to keep them in a light, dry place, spread thinly and turned occasionally. If the early varieties are thus kept late, they will have strong, vigorous eyes, and may be planted as late as the 4th of July, on rich soil, and make a good crop. In this later planting the seed will need to be put down more deeply than earlier in the season—not less than four inches deep, and five inches on most soils would be still better. But if the germ of the eye has been exhausted by repeated sprouting, it matters not how early they are planted the crop will be a failure. Potatoes are best kept through the winter at a temperature not much if any, above forty degrees.

W. J. F.

Monroe County, N. Y.

(1) Plaster can act on any plant through its roots. I doubt its use for potatoes except where lime is absent. It is the dominant manure for pod-bearing plants.

A R J F

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