

THE WHEAT-FLY IN PRINCE EDWARD.

To the Editor of the Agriculturist.

Demorestville, September 8th, 1856.

SIR,—In a late number of the *Agriculturist*, you advert to the ravages of the Wheat Midge; and intimate that the farmers in the sections of County where the Midge has done injury, have been remiss in informing the public through your columns, of the extent of such damage, and of the habits of the insect.

I observe, too, that the Minister of Agriculture offers certain premiums for Essays on the nature and habits of the Wheat Midge. A step altogether, in my opinion, in the wrong direction; but such a one as might be expected from a Lawyer, placed at the head of the Agriculture of this Province.

Who will be the Judges of these Essays? The Minister of Agriculture will probably be one, and other gentlemen will probably be selected, able no doubt to judge of the merits of the composition, of the style of the Essays; but who will be, very probably, entirely ignorant of the question at issue. How then can they arrive at a correct conclusion?

You are very right in complaining of the backwardness of farmers in this country, in writing for your paper. But few original communications appear; and not many of them are evidently written by practical farmers. A good reason may be given for this. As a class, we are exceedingly averse to writing; and but few of us in the rural Districts, have ever written for the press. The Midge has done a good deal of damage to the wheat in the County of Prince Edward, for the last six years. It usually appears about the last week in June, and may be seen immediately after sunrise and before sunset, depositing its eggs upon the young kernels of wheat, by inserting an apparatus with which its body terminates between the edges of the chaff. I shall give it no *learned* description. It is a small orange-colored fly, and cannot be mistaken. It deposits its eggs, as far as my observation extends, only when the *wheat is in blossom*.

This wheat-destroyer is moving westward, and will most assuredly spread over Canada and the far West. We can neither prevent its coming, nor drive it away when once amongst us. It will certainly to a great extent diminish the wheat crop; but with such care as farmers may take, I do not anticipate its total destruction. The earliest varieties of wheat, such as the Soule's and Mediterranean, sown early on well-drained land, and situated where there is a free circulation of air, usually escape. On well-drained soils, the wheat plants come forward and head out together: on undrained lands, many of the plants are retarded in their growth, the period in which the field is in blossom, is much prolonged, and the Midge has a much longer time in which to operate. The Midge is very destructive in fields of wheat which are much sheltered by woods or hills, so that there is not a free circulation of air. And I have observed that when high winds prevailed, during the time when the wheat was in blossom, but little mischief was done.

If the Minister of Agriculture would search for an earlier variety of wheat, adapted to our latitude, than what we now have, he would confer a lasting benefit on the farmers of this County.

A YOUNG FARMER.