



T. L. HASZARD.
President Prince Edward Island Exhibition, Charlottetown.

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

Fall Planting of Strawberries.

Replying to your enquiry, "What do you think of planting strawberries in the latter part of August and September, and under what conditions may success be looked for?" I can best reply by giving my personal experience. In the beginning of 1900, I bought a piece of ground that was in meadow, and the hay, mixed clover and timothy, was taken in about the 15th of July, our seasons being somewhat later here in Western Ontario. A splendid growth of clover followed, and about August 10th this was turned under on about half an acre, and lightly harrowed. On Sept. 1st this was well disk harrowed, and then lightly to smooth it. I then set out 3,500 plants on the ground thus prepared, selecting robust young stock of Greenvelles, Haverlands, Bubachs, Cyclones, Crescents and Splendids. The weather was favorable to growth, enough rain to make watering unnecessary, and by the close of fall I had well-grown plants with double or triple sets of runners. A good deal of weeding had to be done in the meantime, as weed seeds germinated as well, but the rows were kept clean, and a mulch of clean wheat straw given late in fall.

The following season, I took \$60 worth of strawberries off this half acre, sold 15,000 plants, and between the rows planted currant and raspberry bushes, which thrive immensely. This season the strawberry crop was light in this section, but I took about 20 crates, beside 4,000 plants set out alongside of 3,000 I planted last fall, together with a few quarts of currants and a good crop of raspberries. I am now taking the the strawberries all out from amongst the bushes and utilizing the young plants for a fresh planting. I have found that fall planting gives you a medium crop the first season and a full crop the second, whereas spring planting gives no crop the first season and a full and medium crop the next two seasons. In other words, the fall planting has with me saved a season's time. This spring I planted an acre of strawberries on land full of



N. T. DUSSAULT.
President Sherbrooke, Quebec, Fair.

couch grass, and by constant use of the hoe and horse hoe have blotted it out of existence, so that an inspection this morning—a good close one, too—failed to find a single specimen of this troublesome weed. Between my rows of strawberries I have a crop of carrots and turnips, sown about the 5th of July, both making great promise of a good crop. The tops of these I use as a mulch for my strawberries, and by this means will rob the plants of but little. I did not expect to get rid of the couch grass so well by turnip-sowing time, but twice hoeing them has done the trick, and my plants have now a clean field to themselves.

I do not need to draw conclusions, I can leave that to the reader, but I favor fall planting every time, if done early enough to give the plants a good start before the heavy frosts, only care must be taken that the plants used have plenty of white roots, as these are the new plants and not ones whose usefulness has been exhausted. As a general thing, I have found that the plants supplied by nurseries in the spring are a miserable lot, and have had poor success with them; whereas, by getting my plants in the fall I have had better plants and better success.

Renfrew Co., Ont.

C. K. GRIGG.

Some Experiments with Early Potatoes.

In these days of experimental farms and numberless varieties of the products of the field and garden, experiments by the private gardener are not always considered of much account. Still, localities differ, seeds differ, and many other things combine to make sometimes the most elaborate and painstaking experiments of little use and advantage. I propose to give a few results that have come from experimenting with potatoes, in variety, earliness and methods of forwarding and culture. So much has been published along this line in recent years that perhaps what I shall tell may not be entirely new to some of my readers, but coming from one who has had considerable experience and success with this important crop, may make this account interesting and profitable to many. Several ways of forcing potatoes for earliness are employed. I have used and practiced the sod plan, the box of sand, the manure sprouting of the seed and transplanting from a hot-bed. The plan of inserting the seed in a piece of sod and after it has started to grow setting it out, has some disadvantages as well as advantages. The potato requires light, which is not easily obtained in most cellars; consequently, the shoots are very pale and spindly. It also requires a certain amount of heat to give the plant a good start. Still, the advantage of the plants being little disturbed when set out compensates in a great measure for these disadvantages, and I have found it a very good plan, which, however, on account of lack of space in most cellars, cannot well be practiced on a large scale. The hotbed plan of forcing has the great advantage of exposure to light and bottom heat, but is rather limited in its sphere of operation. If the plants are carefully taken up and set out with plenty of ground attached to the roots, like tomato plants, it is the best plan for early potatoes. The hotbed, or, more properly, cold frame, does not require much bottom heat; the same quantity of fermenting manure that would be required under one sash for tomatoes, will give sufficient heat for two sashes of potatoes. To have a few potatoes very early for family use, this is the best plan of all, and I have had good results from the practice of this method. The manure-sprouting system, that of putting the seed potatoes in fermenting manure, has much to commend it, its worst fault being that the sprouts, being rapidly started, are very delicate and slender and liable to be broken in cutting and planting the seed. The sand-sprouting system or method is more generally used than any other, as it is not so limited in its operation and can be more easily carried out than the previous methods. A barrel with holes bored into it all around, in order to let the air circulate, is best. In the bottom place a layer of sand or dry earth, then a layer of potatoes, one deep; next a layer of sand, and so on till the barrel is full. I then stand the barrel near a stove or furnace and every day or so give it a turn around so that the warm air will gain entrance to every part of the barrel and promote the sprouting of the seed. When the potatoes are well sprouted, the sprouts should be strong and thick. I then cut the seed, and carefully placing them in a shallow box so as not to break or damage the sprouts, I take them to the prepared ground and set them in the drills, carefully covering them with a hoe. For a small garden, shallow boxes are best to sprout the seed, as they can grow larger before setting out and the sprouts are much stronger. After the seed is planted and beginning to show above ground, I



C. R. SMALLWOOD.
Secretary Prince Edward Island Industrial Exhibition, Charlottetown.

go over the patch with a steel garden rake and break the crust and mellow the ground around them. This shallow culture, besides keeping down weeds, helps hold both heat and moisture, which are so essential in forwarding any crop, especially early potatoes. This cultivation, if kept up till the plants are in bud, is much superior to hilling and far less laborious. I do not find hilling to be of much advantage. Low ridging, so as to keep the stocks and tubers from being exposed to the sun, is more important and will result in a much earlier and better crop.

If the first bugs are picked off and destroyed, not much trouble will result, but an application of Paris green is the mainstay of the successful potato-grower. The best fertilizer for early potatoes I find to be, on heavy black soil, wood ashes or phosphate; on light soil, hen manure or well-rotted barn manure. Commercial fertilizers give best results on heavy soils. Varieties have got to be so numerous lately that their merits are rather confusing. The best way is to depend on the older, well-tried sorts for a main crop and plant several rows of newer varieties for comparison. I have gained much information as to the character of varieties, and also pleasure from doing so. I think that Bliss Triumph on light soil and Early Ohio or Irish Cobbler on heavy ground will give good satisfaction. They were the best of the varieties tried the past summer. They are much earlier than the Hebrons or Rose sorts and give equally as good a yield.

EDGAR MACKINLAY.

Halifax Co., N. S.

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WM. TOMLINSON.
Secretary Sherbrooke, Quebec, Fair.