

maple generally had possession of the best ground for farming purposes, tapping the trees by boxing was regarded as a ready means of getting a present supply of sugar while promoting an early death of the tree. By this process a tree would be girdled in three or four years, and be the more readily removed from the soil. But now the sugar-maple is regarded as a source of gain,—hence, in extracting its saccharine, the boxing system has been abandoned, and the less exhausting one of tapping substituted for it. But even this is often recklessly done by boring deeply into the tree, thus weakening it and producing decay, when a slight perforation would eliminate the sap without impairing the vitality. When a young sugar orchard is intended as permanent, great care in tapping should be exercised. Without this, their vitality will diminish rapidly. Hence an orchard which ought to last a life-time will die out in a few years, thus depriving the owner of a domestic luxury which a little care and forethought might have preserved through successive generations. If the auger, gouge, or both, are used, the incisions should be light, and so dispersed over the surface of the body as to give it a chance to heal before a second one is made in its immediate vicinity. In this way the holes will grow over and the vitality of the tree be so little affected as to render the flow of sap nearly uniform for a long series of years.

POULTRY.

The marks or indications that a pullet will become a good hen, are a small head, bright eyes, a tapering neck, full breast, straight back, full ovoidal-shaped body, and moderately long gray-colored legs. No yellow-legged chicken, says an English writer, should be kept, as their flesh is not so good; and therefore they should not be bred from. As to the color of the feathers, it is a matter of fancy, it being no matter whether black or white, or an intermingling of these and other colors; mottled gray is deemed a good color by some.

A chicken never eats more tenderly than when killed a short time before dressing, but if not so used, it may hang in the larder three or four days in winter. An old fowl is better, for being kept a week or more in winter. The criterion of a fat hen when alive is a plump breast and the rump feeling thick, fat, and firm on being handled; fat should be found under the wings. White flesh is generally deemed preferable, though some poulterers insist that a yellow-skinned chicken makes the most delicate roast.

Turkeys hatched in May will be full grown by winter, and if well-fed are then ready for use, at Thanksgiving and Christmas time, when a favorable market is created for such poultry. Young cocks are selected for roasting, and hens for boiling.

Geese, the product of early summer hatching, will be full-grown by winter. The criterion of a goose is plumpness of muscle over the breast and thickness of rump, when alive; and in addition, when dead and plucked, a uniform covering of white fat under a fine skin on the breast. It is a good young goose that weighs twelve pounds at Christmas. A green goose is deemed a greater delicacy than a turkey. Goose is better for being kept a few days before roasting.

Ducks, early hatched and properly fed, are in good condition for the table in early winter, and never eat better than when killed and immediately dressed and cooked.

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