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## The Field.

### Barley.

The importance of the barley crop to the Canadian farmer has been steadily growing for many years; and it is probable that the relative value of this cereal will continue to increase as the use of light malt liquors supplants the ardent spirits to which are owing so much poverty and crime. Of late years, the consumption of lager beer in the United States has increased enormously; so, also, here, have increased the sale of other malt liquors. The prime cost of the barley bears so small a proportion to the cost of the beverages made from it that brewers who have attained a reputation will buy none but the very best brands of barley and will willingly pay for extra samples several cents per bushel beyond the market price. Large areas of the Dominion are favorably situated for the growing of this grain. The climate conditions are such that barley attains a perfection unapproached in any other part of the continent. Canada West barley will now sell in New York for 25 to 30 cents per bushel more than New York State barley.

An objection to barley is that it is subject to sudden and violent fluctuations in price. At one time with a full crop the farmer realizes an enormous price; again, with a short crop he has to take a low price. One reason for this is that the market is in the hands of a few men, and when they have grain in hand, they are apt to make the grower smart for the high prices they have to pay when their stocks are light. Still, with all its capriciousness, barley rarely falls below a paving price, and, taken in connection with the fact that it is the least exhaustive grain crop, it is a question whether barley is not the most remunerative of the cereals.

The price of barley will probably continue to be thus uncertain, as long as it is grown mainly for brewing purposes—and this it probably will continue to be. And yet, for feeding purposes, barley is much more valuable than most farmers are aware. It is true that the yield is not so heavy as that of oats; it is also true that it is much less exhaustive to the soil. Of the flesh producing constituents it has a larger proportion than have oats or corn; and there is less straw in proportion to grain from barley than from oats. These are some of many advantages which barley possesses as a feeding crop. When it is generally grown for feeding purposes, the price will not be liable to the vexatious ups and downs to which it is now subject.

Another advantage belonging to barley is that the sections of this continent on which it can be grown in perfection are of limited extent. With one good season, free from drouth, grasshoppers, ch. ch-bugs and all the minor ills that the farmer is heir to, the Western and North-western States can break down the price of corn so that it is more profitable to burn than to ship it; and with wheat, can so over-burden the means of transport that railroad companies become masters of the situation, and can grind the very noses off the faces of the farmers who have been unfortunate enough to have good crops. With barley this cannot happen. Until some genius discovers a means of making good malt from bad barley, Canadian samples will bring fancy prices as compared with the Western article.

The first requisite to success in barley-raising is that the seed-bed shall be fine, rich and in good condition. The soil cannot be too fine for barley. With the object of getting this desirable condition, the land should have been fall-ploughed and submitted to the action of that king of disintegrators, Jack Frost. The fine, fibrous, spreading roots of barley derive nutriment principally from the surface soil, unlike the oat, which sends its penetrating root down and appropriates food entirely beyond the reach of the shallow roots of its congener.

The soil best suited for barley is a rich, clayey or sandy loam, well drained, naturally, or artificially. On a stiff clay, a continuance of wet weather is apt to rot the seed in the ground. On light, sandy soil, the heat of June and July are often ruinous to it. Barley will be found to succeed best when taken after some crop which has necessitated frequent stirring of the surface, and which has been liberally manured.

The time to sow barley is as soon as the soil is in fit condition and warm enough to germinate the seed quickly. But no grain stands checking so ill; so, although the best crops are from early sown seed, it is well not to be in too great a hurry. If the young plant be once seriously damaged, the effect will be apparent in the shortness of quantity and inferiority in quality of the crop. An old proverb says that the right time to sow barley is when the leaf of the elm is "as big as a mouse's ear." Those who have faith in old proverbs can go by this sign if they choose. Our choice, with barley, would be to get sowing done as soon as we thought it safe, and let the elm leaf out as soon afterward as it likes.

When the plants are well through the ground, a good rolling is beneficial and will often bring an unhealthy looking crop to a thriving condition.

Of all the grains, it is with barley that it is the best policy to sow perfectly clean seed. Barley buyers are all experts who know just what they want to buy. Clean barley is what they want, and any foreign admixture is sure to lower the price offered. Sow clean, plump seed of the best sort attainable, and get seed that has been grown upon soil of a different nature to your own. The English growers, who raise the best barley in the world, are very careful on this point. The two-rowed is principally grown here, and is considered to be safer and a heavier yielder; but the four and six-rowed sorts will bring the highest prices, and will get the preference by brewers. As barley is very high in price now, all sorts sell readily; but, in a dull time, the two-rowed is apt to hang long after the other sorts have found purchasers.

### Barberry and Buckthorn as Hedge-Plants.

EDITOR CANADA FARMER.—Would you or some of your correspondents give me what information you can on the following subjects, viz. Of what value is the barberry as a hedge plant, as I have heard it is on trial in some parts of Ontario? Is it hardy enough to stand our climate? Is it likely to form a sufficient barrier against cattle and pigs, and which is the best variety for the purpose, as I understand there are different sorts, also the manner of propagating the plants, and planting the hedge? Also what is the buckthorn and where is it to be obtained? Has a fair trial of it been made in Ontario as a hedge plant, and if so with what success? Also what is the name of the wild thorn having several seeds in each of its haws or berries, which is found growing in different parts of Ontario.

Amaranth, North Wellington.

Opinions differ widely about the value of the barberry for hedging. Some maintain that it is destined to be the hedge plant for North America. Others, again, say that it makes a very pretty hedge, but that is all. There is a prejudice against it, too, on account of the alleged blighting influence which it is said to exercise over wheat. There is no proof that the barberry ever causes blight in wheat, and it certainly exists alongside of wheat frequently without blighting it.

It is easily grown from seed or from plants, either of which can be got from nurserymen. If the seed is sown, sow it in drills, and next spring transplant into the hedge-row.

The buckthorn is a native of this continent, Europe and Asia. Its botanical name is *Rhamnus Catharticus*. It is a deciduous shrub growing from 10 to 15 feet high with numerous branches. The leaves are of a dark green color, oval and serrated; nearly opposite each other on the branches. The bark is greyish-brown. The blossoms are

yellowish-green and small, and are succeeded by round black berries which hang till frost. The roots are black and numerous. "Syrup of buckthorn," a cathartic made from the bark and berries, was formerly in repute, but we believe it is not much in vogue now.

The buckthorn, as a hedge plant, has many favorites. It will grow anywhere and will make a thick hedge with very little attention. It need be clipped but once a year, and that at any time. No insects infest it, mice will not girdle it, and it can easily be grown from seed. In a few years it will get thorny enough to turn the most breachy of cattle. We should like to publish the experience of such of our readers as know anything of its merits by experience.

The wild thorn mentioned may be the buckthorn, but we cannot identify it on so slender a description. The buckthorn has four seeds in each berry.

Modern opinion seems to be tending against hedges as fences, both on this continent and in England. To make a good hedge requires skilled labor and skilled treatment, and till the care of hedges is made a separate branch of the agricultural laborers' profession, as it is in England, we do not think that live fences will be properly attended to. Correspondence on the subject of hedge-plants and hedging is invited.

### How to Bring Back a Run-Down Farm.

EDITOR CANADA FARMER.—I am in the habit of buying store cattle every fall. I have to go through a few townships to pick them up. I see a great difference in cattle. There are some four-year-old steers that it is a shame should be seen in Ontario. They should be heavier at two years old.

I know the reason of all this. Farmers plough too much—nearly all their clearings. They want to raise too much grain, and in trying to do it, they raise neither grain nor stock. Their farms are nearly run out. They cannot get seeds to catch on it, for mother soil is worked off the face of it. They grow wheat till they cannot grow it; then oats till oats fail. These farmers grow little hay, no roots; little manure, for their farms are about half-stocked with poor scrubs of cattle that live on straw all winter and run a great chance of not seeing spring at all. There are thousands of acres of our fertile Ontario land that are farmed in this slipshod way.

I am going to throw out a few hints for those that have farms such as I have described. In the first place, any Ontario farmer who has 100 acres of run-out land, should seed the half of his ploughed land with fifteen pounds of red clover and twenty pounds of different grass seeds that will be good for either hay or pasture. This do at once, let the land be clean or not, for you will not get it just right for seeding by the system you are working upon.

Secondly: Summer-fallow five acres every year, and under-drain it at the same time as you fallow. Two hundred rods of drain in five acres will make it dry, unless it is a swamp. The cost is about \$50.00, and you will get it back in two years.

Thirdly: Sow only one acre of wheat where you have been sowing three. Put it in well and in good time, and manure it well. Sow the very best seed, cost what it may. You will have more from one acre than you have raised from three.

Fourthly: Raise three acres of roots. Put them in right, good, clean land, use good seed. Well attended to and well cultivated, you may have two thousand bushels, and that is nothing great. In this way you can get your straw made into manure and you can keep two head of stock for one.

Fifthly: Keep good stock. Breed from thorough-bred bulls, and if there are none near, go a long way to them. Pure males, sheep, cattle or horses, must be bred from, or your stock goes back. They must be well fed, and must have pure water.

Lobo, Ont.

LOBO FARMER.