

The Secret of Success for Prairie Farmers

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where it belongs. The trees make the difference

That was a very significant report by Mr. Tinline, Supt. of the Dominion Experimental Farm at Scott, Sask., which appeared in the April (1922) issue of *The Canadian Forestry Magazine*, "Three to three and a half times as many potatoes inside the shelter belt as compared with the open field under parallel conditions in 1920 and 1921." He says: "I do not know of any other factor that entered to influence the crop yields other than the fact that they were grown inside the windbreaks. The snow does collect to quite a depth during the winter months. The hedges being seven to eight feet high."

Here is evidence of the highest order as to the value of trees helping to produce crops in dry years, and there are doubtless many other instances scattered throughout the West, where men have noted benefit arising from storing snow over winter behind a tree shelter. Many a man at least, has experienced it in his garden. Near Alsask, about the peak of the dry records in Saskatchewan, there are a number of

men who have grown fine crops of vegetables, raspberries, strawberries and other garden stuff in the driest years, simply because they have been able to preserve the snow behind a belt of trees i.e., because they have been able to keep the moisture they get.

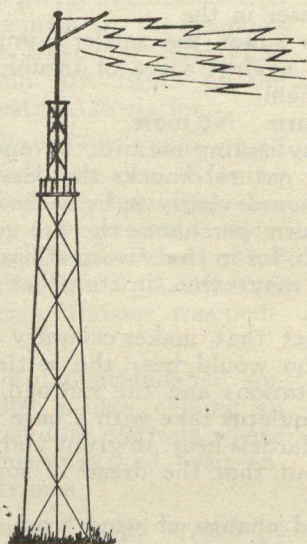
Tree Belts Preserve Moisture

We hear a lot these years about Natural Resources. Every now and again there is quite a crop of paragraphs in the papers and a lot of consultations and correspondence about them. And it is right it should be so. But it certainly is curious to note that not once has any mention been made of the most important resource we have on the prairies "The water we can keep."

Careful records are kept of the water we get, and have been for many years, but beyond that we have no information. Yet we all know Principal Bracken uttered a most profound truth when he emphasized the need of keeping our water. Surely it is time we gave some real attention to this matter. Anybody that has given it any thought knows that tree belts preserve moisture and might go a long way to help solve some of our dry farm problems if the proper steps were taken.

Is it not time something were done about it? Is it not possible to try it out on a scale big enough for a real test, say a township or a section or two? Even if it only proves a failure it should be done. A great many people believe it would be of very great benefit at least locally, through the more level country. Is it not absurd that a country whose actual existence depends upon its already too scant water supply, should allow any portion of that water to be lost without taking every possible steps to preserve it? What would be thought of a business firm that allowed the greater portion of its most valuable raw material to go to waste, or how long would it last? That is precisely our situation, "It's not the water we get that's important, it's the water we keep," and we are not keeping it.

So far nothing has been said about preserving the rainfall in summer but we know Professor King of Wisconsin found the evaporation from the soil to be from 25 to 63% less behind the shelter of a belt of trees, and Carlos Bates, found the saving to be as high as seventy. These are important savings in a dry country. Is it not time something was done about it?



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