

Poultry Yard.

Eggs for Early Hatching.

As a general rule it is not best to have many young chicks hatched until after the first of April. From the middle April to the last of May is usually the most favorable season of the year for rearing young poultry.

If we wish to have extra fine birds for exhibition in the fall, it is well to have a few hatched earlier, yet it is not always the earliest chicks which show to the best advantage. Subsequent care and feeding will produce greater results than difference in time of hatching. Pullets hatched in Feb., will often begin to lay in August, and by the time they are exhibited in September, and October, they will have lost that lively, handsome appearance so common to them about the time they begin laying.

But whether we rear chickens for exhibition or for market, it is generally best to have breeding hens of a year or more old, in preference to pullets of only six or nine months of age. A matured cock is also to be desired, though age in him is not deemed of as much importance as in the hens.

To produce hardy, vigorous, growing chicks, the partridge on one side at least, should be well matured.

Pullet's eggs are usually more plentiful in Jan. and Feb. than those of old hens, yet the latter we prefer. In order to obtain them with certainty, some of the finest hens should be separated from the others and provided with plenty of the best egg producing food available. The scraps from the table should fall to them rather than to any other of the fowls at this time, and, besides, they should be well fed on wheat bran scalded, and then allowed to become luke-warm. To this might be added with profit a little pepper and salt and some corn meal, say one pint of meal to four of the bran. Two or three times each week add also mashed potatoes and chopped cabbage. It would be well also to feed on oats to a greater extent than is usual. Oats and corn at night and mixed feed and scraps in the morning, with good water to drink and plenty of sand to scratch at and pick, and ashes to wallow in, will be almost certain to result in a good supply of choice eggs for early hatching.

The Best Poultry for General Use.

In answer to this question, a correspondent of the "The Poultry World" says he has arrived at the conclusion that the Brahmas, all things considered, are the best for general purposes, for the following reasons:

I have found them the best winter layers, if started early in the season; this is the time of the year when eggs are in a great demand, and the price realized is fully double, for ordinary family consumption. I find that it costs but little more to keep them in winter than in the summer season; and for limited premises, where fowls cannot enjoy good range, the expense in any portion of the year varies but slightly. Good care under all circumstances, and at all times, is a prime necessity to success in breeding fowls. These large birds need no better treatment than do the smaller varieties. At early age the cocks are ready to kill, and they average much larger chickens, for market uses, at a time when dead poultry brings the best price in the cities, than do small breeds.

As mothers, the Brahma hens cannot be excelled. The chickens are hardy; they make a fine table fowl if properly fed and strictly cared for from the shell; and, when in good condition, in the early fall, they will dress from ten to twelve pounds the pair (often heavier), which is almost twice the dead weight of average marketable chicks, now-a-days, of the common varieties. The extra weight will far more than compensate for the extra cost of good care and keeping; and the Brahmas may be limited to narrow confinement by enclosure with a four-post high fence, which is a consideration of consequence in many localities.

I find it necessary, in order to raise good average birds and fit them for the spit at the most profitable time of the year, that my personal attention to their needs, and constant care of their health, is requested. No live stock is worth the trouble and cost of its keeping that is not attended to regularly, systematically, and faithfully—whether for marketing or for competition. Domestic fowls will not "take care of themselves," to advantage. The lack of this kind of treatment is the leading cause of failure with many who do not understand how to raise fowls, which must be attended to, at all seasons, to

succeed with them. As to feeding, of course corn and meal must serve as staple food. If buckwheat, barley and oats can be purchased at average reasonable prices, these should be fed, in lieu of too much corn; as these latter grains are not so fattening, and birds will thrive better with varied food. Whole wheat is also excellent; broken wheat, for chickens in their younger periods.

Sunflower seeds, which can be easily grown in profusion around your houses and walls, without any trouble, save the covering of the seed in spring, is an admirable alternative, and fowls are extremely fond of this. I feed it twice a week, at least, and find it excellent. I give my fowls corn meal and "fine feed," scalded, in equal proportions, in the morning. Into their mash I sprinkle fine salt and red pepper, occasionally. At night I give whole grain. Two meals a day (as much as all can eat up clean), I find better than more; but regularly, every day, is my custom, and fresh, pure water is kept always before them, of which domestic birds drink freely, when they can have ready access to it.

Fowls in confined quarters should be supplied with plenty of green food, daily. Without this they never can be kept in high health. If their range is limited, fresh meat, liver, scraps or the like, should be given them daily. They must have animal food to keep them in good condition. Iron may be given in their drinking water, occasionally, to good advantage, and plenty of clean gravel, pounded oyster shells, &c., are also a necessity, where they are kept in limited runs. I make it a rule to clean the floor of my house daily, in spring, summer, and fall, and once a week I sprinkle air-slacked lime upon the ground. Then you always have a clean, sweet house, and are not pestered with vermin. In winter I cover my hen-house floor with two inches of fresh loam, or fine gravel-sand. The droppings of the roosts, etc., are raked up daily. Every fortnight these floors should be carefully cleaned out, and fresh sand or loam spread again.

Twice a year, at least, I white-washed the inside of my house thoroughly, and in summer I close them all tight, once or twice, and smoked them with burned sulphur. I also apply kerosene once or twice a month to the roosts. This latter plan will keep your poultry free from lice, and is the best mode I know of to effect this object.

Dust baths are highly essential, where fowls are restricted to limited space, at any season. The laying hens' nests should be very thoroughly cleaned out, three or four times during the season.

The Guinea Fowl.

Objections are found in the straying proclivities of this fowl; its disposition to lay away, by which many eggs are lost; and its pugnacious habit of beating other varieties of poultry. But for this latter trick it would long since have been naturalized as a game bird, having been turned into covert with perfect success; but it was soon found that the Guinea fowls drove away other descriptions of game to such an extent that the birds had to be destroyed on that account, the pheasants being most valued. As a domestic bird, however, these bad qualities are susceptible of much amelioration, provided the treatment be kind and good. It is almost hopeless to commence a stock with adult birds; directly they are left at liberty they are "off," and probably never return. But by setting eggs under common hens, and rearing them at home, they grow up much tamer, and will flock around the person who feeds them, and even allow themselves to be taken up and petted, like other poultry. When reared thus kindly, and secluded nests are provided, they will generally lay in the house; and if perches are placed high for them, and they are regularly fed every night, will roost at home also. So far domesticated, they will pay to rear, in places where they can have ample range, for their flesh alone, which is most delicious, resembling that of the pheasant. The hen lays from 60 to 100 eggs per annum, the eggs being rather small, very pointed at the end, and of a dark cream color. These eggs are of a beautiful flavor, and there is considerable demand for them in London, where we have often seen them exposed for sale in little baskets lined with green moss. Mr. Hewitt kindly adds a few remarks, which places their utility in what we must confess is to us a novel light, and which it may be well to "make a note of." He writes:—"As to Guinea fowls, if allowed to breed wild and become numerous, they will invariably displace all the pheasants in any covert they may take to, if not interfered with; and as when thus wild they will run before

dogs with all the pertinacity of the cornorake, they afford but little sport for the gun. It may be added, the flavor of the birds thus allowed unrestrained liberty is certainly improved, and more game-like than ordinary, becoming more like that of partridge than the pheasant. Although thus unsuitable for sport, it must be constantly borne in mind no birds are better house-guards, if allowed constantly to roost in high trees (which they will always do if they can) near the residence of their owners. It is with them as it is with Spanish geese—nothing can stir about in the night without their becoming aware of it; and they invariably give notice of it by their restless cries, so that "to be forewarned of danger is half the battle." Such were the remarks written to me by a friend long since dead, and who added:—"I am sure, Mr. Hewitt, in all these years I have rested safely, without any robbery, though our place is desolate enough to invite pilfering, well knowing my Spanish geese and the Guinea fowls were the best watch-dogs in the neighborhood; in fact, the dogs almost invariably give us only the second notice of coming danger—indeed, my impression certainly is, the dogs themselves as confidently rely on the geese and Guinea fowls as we ourselves do."

Cost of Potato Raising.

You have already published in the *Tribune* my mode of culture of the potato crop, for which premium was awarded. I am induced by Conrad Wilson's recent remarks to give the cost per bushel of two kinds, Brownell's Beauty and the Early Rose. They were raised side by side, both treated alike; the soil is the same, and the land cost \$200 per acre. First I will take one acre of the Rose, planted May 12, 1874:—

Interest on cost of land.....	\$14 00
Plowing and harrowing.....	4 00
Seed, 8 bushels.....	8 00
Marking out, cutting seed, and planting (2 days).....	3 00
Two days' cultivating (twice).....	5 00
Four days' hoeing (twice).....	6 00
Five days' digging.....	7 50
Two days' drawing in and storing.....	5 00
Compost of three bushels slaked lime (slaked with water), 1 bushel fine salt, 3 bushels wood ashes, mixed, and one handful put into each hill at planting—cost.....	4 50
Total.....	\$57 00

I harvested from this one acre 162 bushels by measure; cost of raising per bushel, 35 cents. No other fertilizer was used but the one named. The Brownell Beauty I planted about the 15th of May, on a little less than one-quarter of an acre by measure, and treated the same as the Rose—no difference except in the cost of the seed, but I will here call the cost the same. The Early Rose per acre cost \$49, aside from the seed, so one-quarter of this is \$12.25. Planted 88 pounds of the Beauty (say 1½ bushels), \$1.50, making an aggregate of \$13.75. Harvested from this quarter of an acre of Beauty 149 bushels of potatoes, at a cost of only 9½ cents per bushel, and with me it is a fine table potato. I also raised from one pound of the Beauty, planted separately, 621 pounds, and was beat by other competitors out of sight and hearing.

P. S.—I planted one pound of Peerless by the side of Beauty, cut the same, treated the same, and I only had from it a yield of 215 pounds. Some difference.—ALFRED ROSE, Yates Co., N. Y.

The expenses in the above account are put at the highest figure—more, indeed, than we Canadians would think right. This applies to almost every item in the account, as, for instance, in the interest on cost of land. We must, of course, make some allowance for differences between the value of our own "hard cash" and the depreciated notes of the States, and some for the difference in other expenses. But we would put the whole cost down at a figure under forty dollars. The yield of potatoes we consider very light. There must be something at fault when an acre of potatoes, cultivated and manured as Mr. R.'s has been, gives a yield of only 162 bushels. We would expect from it from 200 to 300 bushels—not less than 200.

This account, high as the expenses charged are, and light as has been the yield, prove that there is a good profit in potato culture. Mr. Rose must, from the price of potatoes throughout the year, have netted, at the very lowest calculation, one hundred per cent, on his potato farming.