

A Fruit that Never Fails.

Of all the small fruits the raspberry alone never fails. The strawberry scarcely excels it in flavor. During its season, amid the greasy and ponderous bill of fare of most American families, it is a genuine promoter of health. Not one of our small fruits is so easily propagated and cultivated. Every one who has a garden plot should be ashamed of himself unless he raises raspberries. The best kind to plant is what is called the Mammoth Cluster; some call it the Canada Black Cap. This variety makes new canes every year from the same root, does not sprout, and is easily controlled. Unless you are an amateur gardener it does not pay to cultivate the tender sorts with the ever-bearing varieties. The tender varieties—such as bear the red berries—sprout badly, and are frequently winterkilled. The ever-bearing are weakened by their extra summer's work, and in their season fall far behind in productiveness. The canes of Black Caps fall over in summer, and their ends take root and form new plants. These should be taken up in spring, when the ground is dry enough, and be planted in thoroughly prepared ground. The rows should be six feet apart, and the plants four feet apart in the row. The first season these should be cultivated the entire summer and allowed to grow as they will. Cultivate them in the same manner next season, but when the canes are 3½ or 4 feet high clip their ends. The canes will after a time throw out shoot, and these will need to be clipped two or three times during the growing season. The clipping can be done very rapidly with a sharp knife by striking the ends of the tender shoots. The canes will thus become stiff and stocky, and will need neither stakes nor wires, and the next season will be loaded with berries. Every spring remove the dead canes, and keep the ground between the rows clear of grass and weeds. In my garden I do this with a double-shovel plow, following with the hoe between the hills. I plow them right through the bearing season—keeping the ground fresh and mellow more than compensates for broken roots. Some gardeners say the plants should be renewed every three or four years, but I have taken seven crops from my present garden without any sign of failing. [T. W., in New York Tribune.]

Starving Wire-worms.

A Michigan farmer writes to the New York Tribune, desiring information in relation to the treatment of low river-bottom land, on which he has failed to get a catch of cultivated grass. He says the original sod of wild grass was turned over and a fair crop of buckwheat grown, but the seeding of a cultivated grass was a failure except in spots. That the next season the land was well prepared and planted to corn, which wire-worms destroyed. To this the agricultural editor of that journal replies: The corn crop being destroyed by wire-worms is evidence that the same insect destroyed the grass seeding. I have never known any crop to grow uninjured, except buckwheat, on land infested with wire-worms. Weeds and some wild grasses which have a hard and tough root, like buckwheat, will grow; but the more delicate grass and grain crops are destroyed. The best means of getting rid of the worms is to starve them, or they may be destroyed by the liberal use of salt, say at the rate of two barrels per acre. Sowing two crops of buckwheat in succession, and keeping the land well cultivated during the time the crops do not occupy it, so that the worms can find nothing to feed upon, will starve them, as they cannot feed on the buckwheat root, it being too hard. I have in two instances destroyed this insect by a thorough summer fallow. A field of some ten acres of flat and mucky land was so full of worms that no crop could be successfully grown. This I desired to cultivate. The land was plowed late in the fall, and the following season four or five times more at intervals, so that nothing was allowed to grow; since which time, some twenty years ago, no worms or their work have been seen. In another case, a field of about twenty acres had been damaged by them. It was summer fallowed and plowed but three times, with intermediate cultivation with harrow and cultivator, so that nothing grew, and no signs of the worm have appeared since, which was some six years ago, but a crop of grain or grass has been grown annually since. I would advise the inquirer to summer fallow his land one season in this thorough manner, allowing nothing to grow to feed the worms; then seed to grass, 1st October, of such variety as he desires to raise, without any grain crop with it.

Ashes for Apple Trees.

When apple or pear trees become diseased from being planted in unfavorable or ill-prepared soil, or from a lack of food, they are very certain to be attacked by insects, which if they were in a healthy condition would probably be unknown. Certain washes, such as lye (a solution of potash), have been applied with success in destroying these insects and restoring the tree to health. But for our own practice we have for the last two years applied a much simpler remedy with more success, as it causes the old dead bark, the chosen hiding-places of insects, to cleave off, leaving in its place smooth healthy surface. This is simply, after a rain and while the bark is yet wet, to throw on dry wood ashes until the capacity of retention is full. If rain soon follows the strength of the ashes is carried into every cranny of the bark, and the effect is working cleanliness on the tree. If there is no rain, the ashes will remain and be working their good effects, and be ready for action when the rain comes. The operation of sowing on the ashes is easily and quickly performed; so if the tree is in a bad condition it is easily repeated until the insects are all destroyed, and a new healthy bark covers the tree. To remedy existing evils sow on the ashes between now and leafing out, after the first rain if possible; for they can be scattered over the bark now with less waste than when intercepted by leaves, and placed more equally where they are needed. As the preventive of future depredations, sow them on in summer, when the insects deposit their eggs, which will never hatch under the influence of the ashes. Two objects are gained by this operation; the ashes or lye they produce furnishes food for the tree as well as destroying its enemies, and imparts cleanliness to the tree.

Iron Filings for Pear Trees.

Mr. G. A. Hubbard, New Haven, Conn., writes the Scientific American that it is conjectured that New Haven county has a larger supply of choice pear trees than any other county in the United States. Some fine varieties, notably the Flemish Beauty and White Doyenne, are generally failures. They set well with blossoms, but the young fruit cracks, prematurely ripens, and drops off. Mr. Hubbard thinks the general success of the pear in that locality is due to the fact that the sandy soil contains a proportion of iron, which he has come to believe is a necessary element in pear culture. He thinks the quantity there, however, is insufficient for the needs of the two varieties named. He bases this conclusion mainly on the fact that a Flemish tree fertilized annually from the sweepings of a smith's shop, in which there is a large quantity of iron filing and bits of iron, gives a good yield of most excellent fruit. He suggests to pear growers everywhere the propriety of procuring iron filings, or drillings, and mixing with the soil about their trees. He would mix with wood ashes in moderate amount.

Transplanting in the Night.

A gentleman anxious to ascertain the effect of transplanting at night, instead of by day, made an experiment with the following results: He transplanted ten cherry-trees while in bloom, commencing at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Those transplanted during daylight shed their blossoms, producing little or no fruit; while those transplanted in the dark maintained their condition fully. He did the same with ten dwarf trees after the fruit was one-third grown. Those transplanted during the day shed their fruit, those during the night perfected their crop and showed no injury from having been removed. With each of these trees he removed some earth with the roots. The incident is fully vouched for, and if a few similar experiments produce a like result, it will be a strong argument to horticulturists to do such work at night.

HOW NUTMEGS GROW.—Nutmegs grow on little trees which look like small pear trees, and are generally over 20 feet high. The flowers are pale and very fragrant. The nutmeg is the seed of the fruit, and mace is the thin covering over this seed. The fruit is about as large as a peach, and when ripe breaks open and shows the little nut inside. The trees grow on the islands of Asia and in tropical America. They bear fruit for 70 or 80 years, and have ripe fruit upon them at all seasons.

Poultry.**The Hen Fever.**

About twenty-five years ago this country was afflicted by a severe visitation of the 'hen mania,' in an epidemic form. It was the first introduction of Asiatic fowls under the form of the great, naked uncouth Shanghai. Exorbitant prices were paid for these, and many speculators suffered severely. Notwithstanding this, it left our poultry in an improved condition, and the late importations from India and the south of Europe, have given us several varieties of fowls that combine early maturity with excellent laying qualities. There is, however, a tendency to make poultry-raising a specialty, and to those who propose to pursue this course a word of caution may be timely.

The farmer who keeps 50 or 100 fowls and gives them the liberty of the farm, including the barn and stables, with the adjoining feeding lots—fording them only the range of the garden, finds his hens the most profitable stock on the farm in proportion to their expense. Stimulated by this experience, he determines to go into the poultry business. He encloses two or three acres and builds a hennery of the latest and most improved pattern, and starts business with 500 thoroughbred fowls, intending to increase the number to 1,000. But, anon, disease creeps in among his flock—his chickens die with gapes, or in feathering, his brood hens mope about and are unhealthy, and, in short, he has had bad luck in general, and he ends the year with no increase of his flock and no income from them. Let us review the situation, and, if possible, see where the trouble lies. In what does the condition of the present flock differ from that of the fowls on the farm? On the farm they had the largest liberty, here they are imprisoned—there they had a great variety of food and pure water, here they are confined to at least a fixed routine of diet and stale water, or none—there the roosts were well ventilated, here they are shut up in overcrowded quarters and breathe a vitiated air—there the chickens followed the mother in her strolling and picked up a great variety of food. The feeble died young, the remainder became strong and able to resist disease, on the principle of the "survival of the fittest;" here there is no room for exercise, no fresh plowed ground to scratch for worms, and none of the brood prove fit to survive.

By this we do not mean to say that a man cannot raise 5,000 chickens as well as 50, but he must observe the conditions of health in the one case as well as in the other. Not more than 100 fowls should be kept in one lot, and it should not be less than three acres, so as to allow them plenty of green pasture.

Brood hens should be furnished fresh plowed earth to scratch in, and the diet of the whole flock should be varied frequently, and a full allowance of animal food should enter into the bill of fare. All the lots should have running water in them, even if it has to be produced by a well and a windmill. The house should be well ventilated, and only in the severest winter weather should it be closed. In fact a few chickens will profitably take care of themselves. A "poultry business," like every other business, requires constant care and attention. With this it may be made profitable—without it, failure is inevitable.—Indiana Farmer.

CUTTING THE TOPS OF TREES.—Excepting with the more experienced cultivators a practice on receiving trees from the nurseries is to reduce the tops considerably. This is a common practice with some growers, but a greater mistake could not possibly be perpetrated. The more branches and foliage a tree is allowed to carry the more roots it will make, and the less chance is there of its producing strong gross shoots; but on the other hand cut it back, and its growth and strength are concentrated in a few buds that start away most strongly in the Spring. Healthy trees, such as are generally supplied, if planted early will always afford plenty of shoots to choose from without having their tops reduced. We never shorten under any circumstances unless it be the extreme tips not quite ripe or any bruised through packing or carriage, but plant with the branches almost entire and properly laid in and trained. By this treatment they cover more than double the space the first year than they otherwise would and bear in less than half the time, and we are sure that those who may feel disposed to give this system a trial will never resort to the old practice again.—[Cottage Gardener.]