

STRAWBERRIES IN NORTHEAST OHIO.

EDS. COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—Mr. TERRY, p. 568, gives no account of the mode of strawberry cultivation by which he obtained the remarkable results which he narrates, nor of the varieties raised. The first, those of your readers who were subscribers "last fall," and have the file, can obtain, but others get no benefit from his interesting letter except that they may be stimulated to experiment. Can you not induce him to give in detail his methods and varieties so that others may profit by his experience?

Would you not also be doing a good thing by inducing all managers of agricultural fairs to make it an absolute condition of the bestowal of a premium for excellence in any agricultural product exhibited that the true name of the variety be attached; and if it were the result of any peculiar treatment, that there be attached a full statement of the mode?
H. S. Baltimore, Md.

(Answer by Mr. TERRY.)

We selected good land, well drained, with an easterly exposure. The land is strong enough to bring 40 bushels of wheat, or 80 of corn, or 300 of potatoes, in a favorable season, and is well adapted to growing the crops. In the fall of 1888 we spread a moderate coat of fresh straw manure on a heavy young clover soil (we have no trouble with white grubs.) This was plowed under in the spring, as soon as it was dry enough, the plow running as deep as the good soil went, but no deeper; this was about ten inches. Then with cutaway and Acme and Thomas harrows, and roller, we pulverized the soil fine enough for a garden bed. The strip was long and narrow, for convenience in working with horse. The rows were marked four feet apart, and plants set two feet apart in the rows, about the first May, as soon as the ground was dry enough to work properly. (Farther south this would be earlier.)

The plants used were of our own growing. They were young ones that had not produced fruit, and grown from parents that had not been allowed to bear. We set out only large strong plants. These are important points. All runners and blossoms were cut off the newly set plants until the latter part of June. Meanwhile the very best of tillage was given. It took but an hour or two, on account of the long rows, to run through with the cultivator, or cultivator with harrow teeth, and I presume we did it twice a week on the average. The very little soil that was left unmoved along the rows was stirred with hoes. No weeds had any chance to grow. No crust was ever allowed to form on the surface. We let the runners start earlier than most growers. Our plants were so large and strong, from having good ones to start with, and very careful setting and thorough tillage, that they were probably better able to throw out strong runners the last of June than many are the first of August. And I believe the sooner you can get the runners started, if strong and vigorous, the better the chance for a big yield. In transplanting, the plants were taken up, shaken and trimmed, and instantly put in a pail of water. When taken out they were put directly in the ground, care being taken that only moist earth came in contact with the roots, and the earth about the roots was well firmed, but left loose right on the surface. Thus treated, every one grew right along, and did not appear to know it had been moved. At the setting out, as well as in every other particular, we tried to do all our work just as well as we possibly could, rather than to do it fast.

When the runners got well started we went through two or three different times and trained them as they would cover all the ground as soon as possible, except enough for a path. After this the cultivator was not used, but the surface was stirred with hoes, not over an inch deep, wherever it was not

covered with vines. We used a common hoe in the paths and a very narrow one among the plants. Our reward was a perfect stand, without a single break, of strong stookey plants. Some time in October we ran lines through and hoed up plants where necessary to make the path 10 inches wide leaving 32 inches for the vines. Then we cut out all the weak plants and enough of the strong ones, so that what were left were about six or eight inches apart. Altogether we probably destroyed $\frac{2}{3}$ of the plants that had grown. We had, as we thought, good reasons for everything done, which of course cannot all be given in a single article, but I will give the wherefore of this as an illustration. It is the nature of the vine to run and spread. We let it have its natural way. But if we had left all the plants that grew, the result would have been too small berries, and this wet season, too soft ones, and too many rotten ones. So after the plants had got about through running we took out, in a way not to disturb the rest, enough so that what were left could have a chance to do their best.

About the middle of November we covered the surface, beds, paths and all, with cut straw from one to two inches thick. Then we put on all over a coat of long wheat straw, just thick enough so one could barely see through.

We are subject to late spring frosts, and do not attempt to get early berries, but rather to keep them back as long as we can. We watched closely, and when the soil under this heavy mulching had got warmed up so the plants were found to grow any way, and before they had grown so as to have a white, tender look, we raked the long straw from the beds and trod it down in the paths. This was done in a rainy day, for the good of the suddenly uncovered plants, and because the straw could then be best packed. When the next rainy day came we went over again, so as to get the straw well packed in the narrow paths. The cut straw was of course left for the vines to grow up through. We thought from previous experience that thus treated we could be sure of a crop in spite of drouth. The season was very wet, and we learned that the cut straw kept our berries perfectly clean. Our Haverlands would have been worthless, almost, without the cut straw and long straw in the paths, as they lay right on the straw in piles. With the straw they were all right. One customer said: "We have always washed our strawberries when we picked them over, before; but with yours it is labor thrown away."

In regard to the Haverlands, our rows should have been 5 feet apart for the variety, giving the extra foot to the path. It throws its fruit stems out over the paths, so that at 16 inches they almost came together, and we had to be exceedingly careful in picking not to step on them. All other varieties were right as we had them. Let me here say, that bed is plowed under, and another half acre treated in just the same way is getting ready to bear next spring. Had we left it, we should have got next season a few good berries and a mass of common ones, such as there is no money in.

Treated as described, our patch brought berries the equal of which in quality and size few people ever saw in market. All that is necessary to sell such fruit is to pick carefully when fully ripe, and get it to the consumer at once. The owner can make his own price in any market if he keeps anywhere within the bounds of reason. H. S. speaks of our crop as "remarkable. It was simply this: About \$25 worth more labor and systematized care were expended on the half-acre than is usual. For that \$25 we received seven hundred fold.

H. S. Also asks about varieties. In my last letter to you these were spoken of. Had we had more Haverlands and fewer of some others we might have reached \$800 per acre instead of \$600. It is only by years of testing on one's own ground that he can tell certainly what varieties are best for him.