Melon Growing.

Melons can be grown with little more expense and as easily as a crop of corn or potatoes. Any good garden soil will answer, but the best results will be obtained on a good, rich and warm sandy loam, with a southwestern exposure. A clover sod will make a good seed bed. The ground should be plowed in the fall, and about twenty loads of manure per acre plowed in the fall or spring in addition to the special manuring in the hill. The ground should then be thoroughly cultivated and harrowed, and furrowed out six feet each way for musk and eight feet for water melons. A shovelful of well-rotted manure should be well mixed with the soil of each hill; for this purpose there is none better than poultry manure. One grower says, "That each barrel of hen manure used added $10 per acre to the value of the crop." The hills should only be raised about two inches, made quite flat on the top; plant about six or eight seeds to the hill. A good method of protecting the plants from the cut-worm is by placing round them a thick rim of paper about three inches high and a foot in diameter, over which they cannot climb. The main thing is to push the plants forward by thorough cultivation and the application of special fertilizers until the vine begins to run. Pinch off the terminal branches, so as to allow the lateral ones to grow. This is one of the secrets on which melon culture rests, for the main branch bears male or barren flowers, while the laterals bear the female or fertile blossoms. The chief pests are lice and the striped beetle; the best remedy is tobacco dust or stems strewn round the plants, or an application of strong tobacco water. Another good remedy for the striped bug is to moisten land plaster with coal oil and scatter a handful on each hill; also Paris green, one-fourth the strength used on potatoes.

In marketing, do not allow the fruit to remain on the vines until ripe; gather as soon as they will part from the stem. A melon ripened in a room is much better flavored than if allowed to ripen naturally. They mature so rapidly that it is necessary to pick every day. It will pay better to start them in frames, so that they can be got into the early market, as the following account of the system pursued by Mr. R. Brodie, St. Henry, Montreal, will show: "I have tried nearly all the varieties which have been boomed by seedsmen, but nothing comes near the Montreal melon for forcing under glass, either in quality, size, or yield. I make a hot-bed a little warmer than for cabbage; used three-inch pots buried in the soil as close together as possible (inverted sods or strawberry boxes will do as well); sow five seeds in each pot. The first week of May make trenches fifteen inches deep and two feet broad; fill these with hot manure, covering with eight inches of soil. I move the hot-beds off the cabbage and celery plants and place them on these, the trenches being twelve feet apart; plant one pot containing four plants under each sash, removing from the pot and shading for a few days. A handful of some special fertilizer will increase the growth and yield very much. Be careful to give the plants air each day. The first of July harden them off by removing the frames. The first on the market will usually bring $12 per dozen. When nearly ripe, place a board or shingle under each melon to prevent the worms eating into and causing them to rot."

Asparagus.

Every farmer should grow sufficient asparagus to supply his own table, as it comes in at the time when there is little else in the way of vegetables to be had. It is a perennial, so that when once planted it may be grown on the same ground without renewal for twenty years. It does well on almost any kind of soil, but better success will be obtained by planting on dry, warm, deep and rather sandy land. The plant may be raised from seed sown in drills one foot apart, in which case they will be fit to transplant into permanent beds the following spring, but a better plan where only a little is required for the use of the family is to purchase the roots from some gardener; while this may cost a little more, still a whole year is saved. In preparing the soil apply well-rooted manure, plow and cultivate thoroughly, then plow furrows twelve inches deep and from two to three feet apart, in the bottom of these put a quantity of well-rotted manure, cover this with two or three inches of earth; on this place the plants, spreading the roots well out; plant so that the crown will be six inches below the level of the surrounding surface. Plant nine inches apart, cover with two or three inches of soil; when the sprouts show through draw the rest of the soil round them until level. From the peculiar succulent nature of the roots this plant is less susceptible to injury from late planting than most other vegetables. Nothing should be cut from the plant the first year, but after the third year a full crop should be obtained. Manure and cultivate round the plants thoroughly each year, and apply one-half pound of salt to the square yard. The shoots may be cut for several weeks each spring, but as soon as they show signs of weakness cutting should be discontinued. In the colder sections it is advisable to cover the bed each fall with a layer of coarse manure or straw, this to be removed in the spring. Though an entirely hardy plant, it will start earlier in the spring if the roots have not been subjected to severe freezing. The asparagus beetle has injured this crop in some sections, but is scarcely known in others; if troublesome, it can be kept under by applying Paris green in the same proportions as for the potato beetle.

Cabbage and Cauliflower.

The cabbage plant is much easier managed than the cauliflower, and is therefore more sure of giving a crop, even under unfavorable conditions. The first consideration is to get the right kind of soil; the best is a deep, rich, sandy loam. They will do well on stiff clay ground.

The land should be drained either naturally or artificially. It should be plowed in the fall, and plenty of well-rotted manure applied; the ground should then be thoroughly worked and pulverized. The seeds can be sown in frames, in boxes in the house, or even in the open air; but, if only a few are wanted for the farmer and his family, it will pay just as well to procure the plants from some gardener who makes a business of this line of work. The cabbage is one of the hardiest vegetables, and where it is wanted for an early crop the young plants should be set out as early in the spring as the ground can be worked. As soon as wheat or oats can be sown cabbage may be safely planted in the open field. After setting out, the plants should be thoroughly cultivated; if they have been planted in rows two or two and a-half feet apart, the horse hoe will, to a great extent, take the place of hand labor. Cultivation should begin about ten days after they are set out. There is special need for this working of the soil if the weather happens to be dry. The most troublesome insect is the cabbage caterpillar, which often attacks the plants just as they begin to head out. This is the larva of a small, light, yellow butterfly, which deposits its eggs on the plants in May or June. The caterpillar can be destroyed by dusting white hellabore on the cabbage, but this cannot be done with safety when the plants are nearly ready for use, as it is to a certain extent poisonous; though, if used when the cabbage is about half-grown, the rains will have washed it off sufficiently by the time they are ready for use. What has been advised for cabbage is the culture necessary for cauliflowers, with the exception that this vegetable being of a more delicate constitution it requires to be more carefully handled, and cannot be set out quite as early in the spring; but still the plants must be planted before the dry, warm weather begins or it will not do well. The cauliflower delights in a cool atmosphere, and does not give as good a yield in a dry season.

New Fruits—Worthless or Otherwise,

About this time of year fruit tree agents will be travelling over the country selling all kinds of fruits. They can supply any variety which the farmers may wish, but will take good care that they do not come back for a recommendation when the tree comes into bearing. In view of the numberless frauds which have been practised, it seems hardly necessary to give the advice: Never give an order to any agent who is not known, and not even then, unless the house which he represents is known to be reliable. It is always wiser to deal with those who have a reputation to keep up, and who are not too far away. Poor stock is always sent as far away from the nursery as possible. Plant standard varieties; let some one else do the experimenting with the new, high-priced, money-making varieties; if they prove to be of any value they will soon be heard from through the agricultural press and the reports of the Fruit Growers' Association. That our readers may not be deceived by sharpers, from time to time we will give descriptions of worthless as well as valuable fruits, grains, etc. The following extracts from a report of tests of four new types of fruits, conducted by Prof. Bailey at the Cornell University Experimental Station, will be found interesting, and our readers will know how much confidence to put in the descriptions of the same in the agents' hand-books: The first, Prunus Simonii (Simon or Apricot) plum, is not a hybrid between the apricot and the plum, but a distinct species, supposed to be a native of China, and though a very attractive fruit, it has not given satisfaction, for the Professor says: "I have never tried a specimen which I could say was edible. I make this unwilling confession because the fruit is exceedingly attractive to look upon. It is said that the bitterness passes away in the cooking, but my experience has not been reassuring." He then adds: "After some years of study of this fruit, I am forced to conclude that it is worthless for orchard cultivation in the latitude of New York, but as an ornamental tree it has distinct merit." The Wineberry—Prof. G. C. Georgeson sent seeds of this raspberry from Japan, where it grows wild. The United States Pomologist report says of this plant: "More ornamental than useful." Prof. Bailey says that it has received considerable notice in England, but always for ornament, never for fruit, and concludes with: "I find no fruit with any commercial value in our wineberry plants. I am nevertheless ready to believe that the species may eventually give us fruit of considerable value, but for the present I should class it among the ornamentals rather than the fruits." The Crandall Currant—This new variety was originally found growing in Kansas, and undoubtedly gives great promise as the parent of a new and valuable race of small fruits. The Crandall, however, is too variable to be reliable, as only a dozen plants, or less than one-fourth of the whole number, could be called profitable. There is every reason to believe that if cuttings were taken from these plants alone, the Crandall would soon rise in popular estimation. To some the flavor is disagreeable, but on the whole it could be recommended as a good fruit for home consumption. It has so far been free from attacks of the currant worm. The Dwarf Juneberry, the Success—The variety tested was also found in Kansas, though different kinds are found growing wild over the Northern States. The Cornell Station obtained two hundred plants in the spring of 1888, and they have since given three good crops. This berry closely resembles the huckleberry in flavor and appearance, but is more juicy and palatable. The plants are exceedingly hardy. Prof. Alwood says of this berry: "I venture to predict that it will become very popular, and fill a long felt need for a first-class small fruit ripening just at the close of the strawberry season." The robins seem to be very fond of this berry, for he adds: "The birds bear me out in the statement that the Juneberries are good. We are not yet ready to report upon other cultivated varieties, but the Success is an acquisition if the birds can be induced to avoid it."

The Fleece.

Mr. John Hallam, of 83 and 85 Front St., Toronto, Ont., and 87 Princess St., Winnipeg, Man., desires farmers to write him, giving answers to the following questions:—How has your flock wintered? What is the condition of the wool as compared with last season's clip? How many sheep and lambs have you this year? Of what breed are they?

Before shearing, be sure and clip off all dung locks and remove all straws and burrs from the fleece, also all stained wool. Do not wrap up any of this refuse in the fleeces. This is frequently done, and has tended not a little to permanently reduce the price of Canadian wool. It pays to send all farm produce to market in first-class condition. This age demands that all goods be put on the market in the most attractive manner, and that the quality be as good as possible.

The place where the shearing is done should be free from straw, hay, dead grass and seeds, as these injure the wool and make it of less value.

The wool should be carefully press-packed, so that not less than 20,000 lbs. can be put in a car. This will insure the lowest possible rate of freight, as the C. P. R. charge as much for 10,000 lbs. of loosely packed as they charge for 20,000 lbs. of press-packed.

All packages should be of one quality. Mr. Hallam advises that they be sorted as follows:—

1. The fleeces of males, those from the different pure breeds, such as Leicester, Cotswold, Shropshire, Southdown and Cheviots, should be put in separate packages.
2. All ewe wool and short wool of the Montana type.
3. All cross-breds between coarse and wool of the Montana type.
4. Lambs or yearlings.
5. Dead wool, or wool that has been taken off sheep after they are dead.
6. The fleeces should be tied up with smooth, fine twine, and on no account should binder or loose-spun twine be used.
7. It is of the utmost importance that the wool should be tied up in separate fleeces and a record kept of the number of fleeces of each kind.

Those of our readers who have wool to sell should answer Mr. Hallam's questions and be guided by his advice, send him samples of their wool and ask him for offers for same. He should be able to pay better prices than country dealers, as he is a very large operator. When you write him, mention the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

Put a few odd moments on the lawn. Why is it that, with every advantage, there are so few lawns in the country as compared with the cities? It may be that time will not permit of a thorough preparation of the ground, but at least a few sods can be put in places where the grass is lacking, and the brush and limbs can be cut out and burned.

We have been informed that the English Shropshire Sheep Breeders will not withdraw their special prizes offered at the World's Fair because the rules of the Exhibition forbid the coloring of the wool.