

THE

# Canadian Agriculturist,

OR

JOURNAL AND TRANSACTIONS OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE  
OF UPPER CANADA.

VOL. XIII.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 16, 1861.

No. 20.

## The Forming of Composts.

Much that is practicable yet remains to be done by Canadian farmers, in compounding and economising manure. Various are the substances, more or less at hand, which, when properly applied, yield to plants their necessary nourishment, and which are essential indeed to their healthy growth and maturity. Farm-yard manure comprises in general all that our cultivated crops require, and consequently is the farmer's sheet anchor. But this manure varies considerably in its composition and nutritious power, according to the manner in which animals are fed and looked after; and experience has long since taught the agriculturists of Europe that it may often be more economically employed as a manure in connection with other substances,—such as gypsum, woollen rags, sawdust, peat, or other earthy matters. Composts of vegetable and calcareous substances will contribute largely to augment the quantity of manure produced on a farm. These composts can be formed of all animal or vegetable materials which readily decompose by fermentation, which the presence of lime accelerates. The leaves of deciduous trees possess a highly fertilizing power, and in most places in this country can be readily procured by collecting and adding them to the manure heap, there to be mixed up with dung and earth, or they may be directly carted to the yards and stalls of the farm; and used for bedding or litter. Ferns are also beneficially employed for this purpose, when they can be readily obtained in sufficient

quantity, though they do not contain equal amounts of fertilizing elements as the leaves of trees. All vegetable and animal matter, is valuable when saturated with the liquid of the manure heap and fermented. Peaty deposits or the earthy matter of swamps can be made available as manure, when the antiseptic properties are neutralized by the action of lime. Peaty deposits are usually present in the vicinity of argillaceous soils, and when applied to adhesive clays their porosity is increased, and consequently their fertility augmented. Peat, or black muck, such as is found more or less in swampy ground, is a substance, when dried, very suitable to form composts for such soils. The proportion of farm-yard manure and lime necessary to produce fermentation in peaty substances depends upon the character of the three materials. Seven parts of peat, two parts of farm-yard manure, and one of lime, will generally prove a good manure. To this should be added common salt, at the rate of 4 cwt. to the acre of the land to which the compost is to be applied. The compost heap should be tumbled once at least previous to being applied to the land. As a manure for the cultivation of turnips, mangels, and potatoes, this compost is very suitable. Peaty substances may also be advantageously used to absorb the liquid which drains from stables or manureheaps, and for increasing its amount; but it is more advisable to form a compost with farm-yard manure and lime.

The usual and most practicable way of form-