

THE JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE.

This plant is misnamed: it does not belong to the artichoke family; it is a sun-flower.

Importance has of late been attached to it, in consequence of the solicitude occasioned by the disease of the potatoe; and its tubers have been recommended, with undue confidence however, as a substitute for those of that esculent. The Jerusalem Artichoke is a native of Brazil, and was introduced in 1617. It is perfectly hardy, much more so than the potato and yam, both of them natives of the same hot climate.

Its culture is very easy. Abercrombie stated long ago, that "half a peck of roots will plant a row of 120 feet, if the sets be two feet distant in the row." Experience has proved that the plant will grow anywhere, and that it adheres so pertinaciously to the site on which it has once been introduced as to be with great difficulty eradicated. Our own practice instructs us that it is always best to trench and enrich any ground selected for it; but to keep the plant apart from garden crops. A rod or two of land at the end of some field or orchard of good, rather free, or sandy loam, thoroughly pulverized to the depth of eighteen inches, and sufficiently manured, will produce a fair yield. Plant, in March, and set, with two or more eyes, or small entire tubers, eighteen inches asunder, in trenches, four or five inches deep, two feet apart; cover the sets, and treat the growing plants exactly according to the best method observed with the potato. In November the crop will be ready for the spade, and some roots ought then to be preserved in dry sand, or charred peat, or turf: but the tubers keep best in the ground. In March the eyes become active; the tubers then indurate assume a reddish hue, and deteriorate for the table.

The following is an extract from the *Penny Cyclopaedia* on this plant:—

The term *Jerusalem artichoke* "is a barbarous corruption of the Italian *Girasole*, this species having been introduced into Europe at the Farnese garden at Rome, from whence it was originally distributed. The roots are composed of a number of oblong tubercles, very large and fleshy, reddish outside and within, resembling a potato; the stems are herbaceous and upright; the leaves are alternate and opposite, petiolate, oval, rough, the flowers are yellow and small. It is a native of Brazil. In France, it is called *Topinambour* and *Poir de terre*. According to Braconnet and Payen, the tubers do not contain *fæcula*, but a vegetable principle called *Inuline* or *Dahlina*. These tubers, when cooked, form a good substitute for potatoes, and by some are even preferred. Many animals eat them with

avidity, and they are especially recommended for sheep. Payen has succeeded in obtaining from them by fermentation a liquor resembling beer, which might be used as a substitute for that beverage. This species is not easily produced from seed in this country; but it may be propagated by its roots, which will produce stems for many years, if allowed to remain in the same place. It will grow in almost any soil, but the better the soil, the more vigorous and productive will be its growth."

This vegetable, in common with all other culinary roots, should be cooked by gentle simmering till it becomes quite tender throughout. Some boil it before the removal of the rind, others peel it while raw; the jelly is more effectually preserved by the former method: but in either case it should be served up in a dish, with as much simple thick milk as will just cover the tubers; thus dressed it is excellent, and may be eaten with salt or sugar, with or without a little butter, according to taste. The great obstacle to its general introduction is the decided dislike which many persons entertain for it. In nutritive qualities it is unquestionably rich; and if the sauce be thickened with oatmeal instead of wheat flour, these will be proportionably increase: the plant likewise is exceedingly productive; its importance under existing circumstances is, therefore, very considerable. As regards its more important uses in the farm yard, it will be found that animals unaccustomed to it will not readily eat it. They may be given raw or boiled to pigs. It can only be proper for cultivation in odd corners of fields, and otherwise waste places. Under favorable circumstances ten or twelve tons per acre have been grown.—*Morton's Cyclopaedia of Agriculture*.

GERMAN METHOD OF CULTIVATING POTATOES.

The Editor of the *Working Farmer* is trying an experiment to test the advantage of a method of raising large crops of potatoes which is said to be practiced with success in Germany. He says:—

We planted whole tubers and at four feet apart. When the vines were six inches high they were spread out horizontally, like the spokes of a wheel, and entirely covered with three inches of soil; in a few days they sprouted through, and when again six inches high the process of bending down and covering was repeated, and thus continued at each new growth to this time. We have covered 100 hills four times, 100 hills three times, and the balance of the field are cultivated in the ordinary way. Those cultivated in the ordinary way are all in blossom at this