

Root Crops and their Management.

Mr. ARTHUR Abinger Hall Farm, Surrey, writes in *Bees Mess.* as follows, on this subject.

The first and most important point is the preparation of the soil. In all cases that should be done, if possible, in the autumn. Hay the land well cleaned, the farm yard manure carted out, and ploughed and sub-soiled, or cultivated deep by steam, before the frost sets in; and only use the cultivator and harrows in the spring. Then, with two or three hundred weight of guano per acre, you stand the prospect of a good crop of roots. The safest and best for the south is mangold wurtzel and kohlrabi. I have fourteen acres of them mixed, two rows each, and six acres of carrots, mangolds, and kohlrabi all mixed, and have had 125 sheep feeding on them since the beginning of October. They will last them three months, and I have never seen sheep do better. They are all cut up by the turnip cutter and mixed; for fattening stock do better with a mixture, and you can grow more produce of a better quality. It may not look so well to the eye, but it is much better for the pocket and the farmer's profits and the health of his stock. I have stored all our other mangolds, and the kohlrabi I intend to feed off by sheep. There are no roots that you can grow that sheep do so well on as kohlrabi. They should all be sown by the end of April, and you can get any quantity per acre, by using plenty of manure; as they are like mangolds you cannot give them too much. I used only two and a half hundred weight of Phospho-guano, and four hundred weight of salt per acre, and well horse-hoed and stirred the soil to let in the air; and hand-hoed them to keep them clean. The land, when fed off with half the crop, will be in a very high state of condition, and fit to grow anything you wish to put on it.

Weeding Potatoes with Sheep.

It may not be known to farmers in general that it is a common practice in some of the potato-growing districts to turn flocks of sheep into the potato fields for the purpose of eating down the weeds. The sheep will not touch a potato vine, they can not be starved into eating them. This pasturing with sheep is very advantageous when the crop is a late planted one, so that the hoeing cannot be completed until the haying or harvest is finished. At the growing season it is the planter's aim to keep down the grass and weeds so that they may be covered with dirt by the cultivator and hoe, when these are used. Pasturing with sheep will attain this object. Early planted crops, the cultivation of which is completed in the first half of the summer, frequently become grassy and weedy before the time of digging—when the size of the tops precludes cultivation. In this stage the sheep are economical weeders. It is hardly necessary to mention that the food thus given to the sheep makes a double profit, inasmuch as it costs absolutely nothing, while labor is saved and weeds prevented from seeding in the crop. *Rural.*

Burdock.

No good farmer will allow this coarse and disagreeable weed to flourish on his farm. After a few plants have been allowed to go to seed, a long time will elapse before they can be exterminated. As burdock is a biennial plant, the seeds germinate one season and produce seed the next. After this, the root and all dies. Burdock is seldom seen in cultivated fields. In neglected nooks where the ground is rich and bare burdock will supplant everything else.

The best way to eradicate the plant is to cut it away with sharp hoes, two or more inches below the surface of the ground late in autumn, when the water will enter the roots and destroy them. If the ground where they grow can be ploughed, they may be easily exterminated, unless there is much seed in the soil, which a few years of cultivation will destroy by vegetation.

At this season of the year, burdock plants may be seen in many nooks, spreading their broad leaves over an area of ground, allowing no other plant to live beneath them. If they be cut off, there will be sufficient vital energy in the roots to send up a new system of stems, which will produce a bountiful crop of seed before winter. But cut them off a little below the surface of the ground with a sharp broad hoe, or grubbing hoe, or mattock, and put a table spoonful of salt on the top of the tap root, and burdock will never sprout from such roots.—*Ex.*

A Somersetshire Stile.

A CORRESPONDENT in the *Collage Gardener* sends the following illustrated descriptions of a kind of stile which appears easy of construction, and effectual against larger animals, though it would be of little use against sheep and pigs.

"As the merits of the Cornish stile have been discussed in the last few numbers of your journal, I venture to call attention to an invention of my own, which I have had in use for nearly 10 years, and which has been found to answer every purpose for which a stile is required, even to a free passage of your correspondent's 'departed crinoline'."

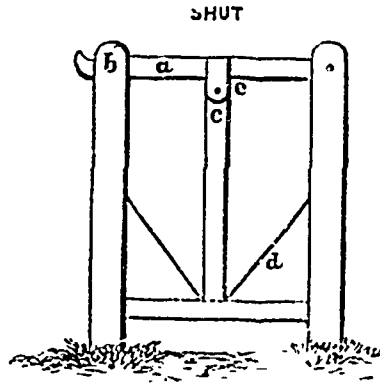


FIG 1

You will observe from the above engraving (fig. 1) that it is very simple in construction, and entirely self-acting. It has no fastening, as the cross-bar (a), after being lifted up for the person to pass through, falls back to its place in a slit in the post (b) by its own weight, so that it cannot be left open, a great desideratum in stiles and gates of all kinds.

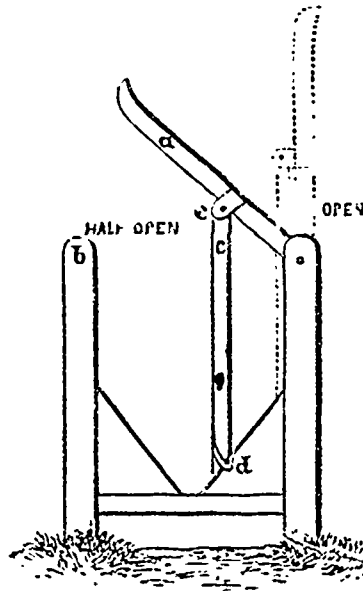


FIG 2

When the bar (a) is lifted up (see fig. 2), the pendulant (c) turning on the pivot (c) naturally rises with it, and runs up to the bar (d), to which it is fastened by a ring at the bottom, thus leaving a perfectly clear space between the posts for a person to pass through. The stiles are made of iron and wood as required, and are found to answer well in other places besides this, as the orders now rapidly coming in abundantly testify. It is patented."

Plaster for the Hop Aphid.

Mr. F. COLLINS, of Rochester, N.Y., a gentleman thoroughly conversant with hop culture, and patentee of the best system of training the plants we know of, strongly urges all engaged in the business of hop raising to be ready with plaster to avert the ravages of the aphid by a thorough dusting of the vines at the first appearance of this insect pest. He says that simple as this remedy is, it is entirely effectual. Indeed the remedy is even more simple than appears at first sight, inasmuch as common road dust

will answer the same purpose as the plaster so far as the insects are concerned, but plaster is to be preferred because it not only destroys the aphid, but benefits the plant. He mentions in confirmation of his statements, that a number of hop yards lying under the lee of a railroad, and swept during the summer by its clouds of fine dust, were entirely free from aphid, and produced fine crops, while yards at some distance from the track were badly infested, and the product destroyed.

On Drying Corn in Sheaves.

The following extract is well worth the attention of both landlord and farmer:—"Mr. Stephens, of Edinburgh, communicates to the *Journal of Agriculture*—The simplest method of securing the crop after cutting it down from being damaged by standing long in stooks on the ground, is that universally practised by the agriculturist in the woody parts of Sweden and Norway, and which never fails in completely protecting at least nine-tenths of the grain from growing in the sheaf, as well as the straw from any serious injury. In those districts every farmer provides as many *sades stor*, corn stakes (that is stakes for drying the grain), as will be necessary for the quantity of his growing crop. They are generally made of young white pine, eight feet long, about one and a-half inch diameter at the top and four inches at the bottom. The upper end is pointed, to allow the sheaf to pass easily down over it, and the lower end is likewise pointed to facilitate its being fixed in the ground. When a field of grain is ready for the sickle, the stakes are conveyed to the spot, and the reapers proceed with the work; the stakes are put up in rows behind them, in the same manner and at the same distance from each other as is common in stooking the crop. A man, with the assistance of an iron crane or spit, will set up five hundred of these in a day. The next operation is to put the sheaves on the stake. This is performed by raising the first sheaf up to the top of the stake and passing it, with the root end downwards, to the ground, the stake being kept as nearly as possible in the middle of the sheaf. The sheaf then stands perpendicular and round the stakes. The second sheaf is fixed on the stake in an inclined position, with the grain end sloping a little downwards, the stake passing through the sheaf at the band in a transverse manner, and in that position it is pressed down to the first sheaf, and thus forms a covering to it. All the other sheaves are threaded on to the stake in a similar way as the first sheaf put on, keeping them all one above another, with the root-ends facing the south-west to receive as much of the sunshine as possible, on account of the greater quantity of grassy substance they contain at the end. As each sheaf thus acts as a covering to the one beneath it, and as there is only one that can touch the ground, rain cannot at any time penetrate through them, and it is very rare that any single heads of grain on a stake are injured. I have witnessed these operations performed with as much expedition as actually attends the common way of setting the crop in the field in stooks. The number of sheaves put upon each stake is generally fifteen or sixteen. The advantages arising from the above simple manner of protecting the crop are many, exclusive of the consideration of the grain and straw being preserved in a wholesome state. The farmer by it is enabled to commence reaping early in the morning while the dew is yet on the grain. Partial rainy weather does not prevent this operation; he can employ all his people in cutting down the crop before carrying home part of it, and when he does commence carrying it home not the least particle is shaken out, for, instead of throwing a single sheaf into the corn cart or waggon at a time (by which much grain is frequently lost), the stake with the whole of its contents is taken up, put into the cart, and carried to the corn-yard. When the crop is all carried home the stakes are collected and laid aside to be similarly applied the succeeding year, and when carefully kept during the period they are in use they will last twenty or thirty years. I have known many farmers residing on the plains of Sweden, where wood is extremely scarce, who, rather than be without such preservatives of their crop, choose to purchase them at a dear rate and transport them thirty or forty miles to their possessions. Indeed, the practice of staking the grain is there so general and so beneficial that the number of stakes used is often taken notice of when a lot of land is offered for sale." The above method of securing the crop during a wet season is so well adapted for our variable climate, and being cheap, simple, and efficient, it must be the stupid adherence to old habits that hinders our farmers from adopting such a mode. I believe in some parts of Aberdeenshire it is adopted during wet seasons with success, though many projects made of late induce me to think that a lesson might be taken from Norwegian and Swedish farming.—J. KERR, Galashiels, in *Inverness Courier*.