

FARM AND GARDEN.

THE HOME OF THE PLUM WEEVIL.—A difference of opinion exists among writers and plum-growers relative to the hibernal abode of the plum weevil—they do not agree as to its dormitory.

Science has become so exceedingly scientific that it is a questionable procedure to make practical comment on contemplative subjects. All the same, it is my opinion that they do not remain in the ground during the winter, either in the grub or beetle state. Besides, I question the power of flight reputed to them.

I have found them social in their way, like house flies, cuddled together in clusters for shelter and comfort. The family dwelling, the wood-house and the stable, are their chief places of resort.

Where plum trees are in close proximity to a dwelling, they congregate in the recesses of windows, under the carpet, and remain dormant until disturbed in the spring by the house maid.

At the advent of warm weather, when the trees put forth leaves, the beetle, fully prepared for work, comes forth also and with that mysterious insect intellect assiduously labors upon the appointed fruit that is to be the abode and food of her offspring which she is destined never to behold.

When that old hen bug dropped her last egg into the crescent nest, her race was run, and she was bound to go the way of all spent bugs.

If the next year's brood is not greatly reduced in number by the pick-up process, it will be owing to that inveterate put-off propensity which some people indulge in.

From all the earnest curculio literature published, the impression would be that the aim of the grower of plums was the total extinction of the insect.

It would be wise to consider the sequence before dispensing with its services. A peculiarity of the plum is to overbear, and without the gratuitous work of the insect, at the commencement of growth, the greater part of plum orchards would be used up trees.

Banish the bugs, and you may complacently boast for one or two seasons of the enormous quantity of fruit your trees are bending under, and you lacking the nerve to relieve them of any portion of the load. With some varieties, one season's over production will exhaust the energy of a tree past recovery.

To some extent, I am disposed to be on friendly terms with the little brown bugs. They thin out the fruit at the right time with more skill than the owner of the trees.

The treatment of the plum differs from that of the apple and other fruits. To be successful, annual manuring, and thorough cultivation is essential until the fruit is well advanced. Neglect a plum tree, and it will reward you with neglect. A change of manure is beneficial, alternate applications of lime, ashes, salt, or a dressing of mixed manure.

The tree is a surface-feeder, and is affected by external causes sooner than trees that send roots deeper into the ground. Extremes of temperature, drouth, and moisture, are detrimental. The tendency to send up shoots should be repressed. Root-pruning will check and keep the roots within bounds. This, with cutting away exhausted wood will tend to renovate and develop bearing wood. If a tree is allowed to expend its root power in sending forth suckers, it very soon becomes enfeebled from loss of nutriment, and a loss of fruit the result. Cutting back one third the new growth in the latter part of summer forwards the ripening of the wood. The trees retain their foliage longer, and are better prepared to resist the cold of a severe winter.

FEEDING TOO MUCH GRAIN TO POULTRY.—Corn has long held the lead as a special food for poultry, and on almost every farm, if the hens are fed at all, it is with corn. It has served an excellent purpose, however, as the hens usually have free range, and supply themselves with those elements which are lacking in the fat-producing corn, which really does more to keep them in good flesh and condition than assisting in egg production. If grain is fed—and once a day is often enough, if the fowls have the use of the range—it should consist principally of wheat and oats, with only a small proportion of corn. Laying hens should be fed differently from those intended for market, as in the one case, eggs are desired, and in the other, fat, or weight. A cow giving large quantities of milk does not readily fatten. A similar rule applies to the hen; a good layer does not fatten quickly during the laying period, and a hen that takes on fat, and eats large quantities of grain in preference to bulky food, is not usually a good layer.

What farmers should learn is, that hens ought not to be fed exclusively on grain, else they will cease to lay. They will keep in better health, thrive better, and become more productive when fed some bulky food, as boiled roots, steamed cut clover, short grass, or even well-cured corn fodder, though a small proportion of grain, with a little meat and milk will, of course, complete the ration. By regulating the food so as to combine the elements necessary for her purpose, the hen may be confined without detriment, while the profits will be much larger than when she is fed wholly on grain, and especially on corn.

HOW TO SUCCEED WITH FOWLS.—Success with fowls kept exclusively for their eggs, is gained only by constant care for their cleanliness and comfort. They must have a variety of food, a good, large run, with opportunity to exercise, or be forced to take exercise in scratching for their feed, as upon a floor covered with chaffed straw. They may be kept safely in flocks of seventy to one hundred, but the larger the flock the more danger there is from disease and from thieves. The free use of crude carbolic acid is a great safeguard. It may be applied in sawdust or clay, the dry material being moistened by the carbolic acid thoroughly stirred into it. The less of the carbolic acid is used the better, provided every particle of sawdust or of

dry clay has its quota. The disinfectant thus prepared, may be used in the nests, in the dusting box, upon the floors, under the roosts, etc. It is fatal alike to parasites, and to tendency to disease in most cases. It cannot be depended upon in dirty houses, for fermenting manure, receiving fresh additions constantly, will overpower almost any disinfectant that could be used.

By spading or plowing up a portion of the runs frequently, fowls get healthy exercise, and find a few grubs and worms, and with brood fowls, which are active by nature, exercise means eggs, and incidentally, perfect health.

KEEPING FOWLS IN CONFINEMENT.—The principal difference between hens in confinement and a flock having the privilege of a large field or orchard, is not that the free fowls derive more food, or a greater variety, but everything necessary to their comfort may be supplied them when they are shut up in yards. If there is any advantage in the keeping of the flocks, it is with those that are confined, for these are under the direct watchfulness of the owner, and have no wants unsupplied. Admitting that a flock in confinement is supplied with plenty of food, of a varied character, pure water, warm and dry quarters, and everything necessary to proper production, it must be acknowledged that the flock having free range, if it receives equal care, or even partial attention, will give better results than the other.

Knowing such to be the case, as a rule, the question is, what is the cause? It is due to the fact that when fowls are confined they are overfed. Being accustomed to have their food brought to them instead of seeking it, they have no inducement to exercise. With them, it is, wait, and during the period of idleness they soon learn to pull feathers, and engage in all the vices arising from laziness and enforced idleness. If they are so fed that they must always seek the food in some manner, by being compelled to wait for it, and not eat all they wish in a few moments, they would have but little time for leisure. All food should be given in a way to compel the fowls to scratch for it, for exercise is essential to egg production. It matters not how much space a flock may work over, for the hens of some of the large breeds do best on a small range, provided they are kept busy, and this should be done, even if no food is given during the day, by allowing them all the grain just before they go to roost. Keep them in full exercise, and avoid getting them fat, unless they are intended for market.—*American Agriculturist for September.*

MONEY IS MUTTON.—The fact is, the times are hard. It is not easy to keep up one's courage. Turn which way we may, there is not much money in farming. But sheep-raising, for mutton and fat lambs, seems to be as promising as anything I can think of. The country is growing rapidly. Capital is abundant. Living is cheap. Our resources are unlimited. There is plenty of work to be done, and no lack of machinery to facilitate its accomplishment. The so-called "working classes" are, or ought to be, better off in this country than at any other time in the history of the world. We have two country butchers that come round twice a week to supply farmers and others with meat. The beef is only so-so, but it is far better than the mutton, and the "lamb" which they bring us is a year-old Merino, so thin and poor that in cooking, the flesh on the leg shrinks so much that it leaves an inch or more of the bone bare. This is always a sure sign that the sheep are poorly fed, and that the flesh contains a large percentage of water. When sheep are fat, the lean meat contains much invisible fat, and the meat is tender and juicy, and does not shrink away so much in cooking. It is no wonder that mutton is not as popular here as in England. The trouble is not in the breed. We have all the English breeds of sheep here, and the Merino in addition. And, so far as my experience goes, a little Merino blood improves the quality of the mutton, and gives us a hardier and healthier sheep, better adapted to our climate and system of farming. We do not feed well enough. It would pay us handsomely to feed our sheep more or less grain, malt-sprouts, bran and cotton-seed cake.—**JOSEPH HARRIS.**

TO DESTROY QUACK GRASS.—From long acquaintance with this grass, I have learned not to fear it, but to value it for its usefulness. Having had land that was over-run with it, I used part for pasture, and by top dressing with stable manure or commercial fertilizer, the grass furnished the cows with abundant food when other provision was hardly procured. By plowing the land deeply, so that the quack was completely covered, but leaving the loose soil well-filled with the long, white roots, and by careful harrowing, so as not to tear up the sod, this was quite killed, and gave no trouble. An old quack sod thus plowed under, is equal to one hundred loads of manure per acre, for it fills the soil to a depth of several inches, with a rich, brown vegetable matter, which will furnish food for several crops. This grass, skillfully used, may be made of great service, but if the work is only half done, there will be endless trouble with it.—**H. S.**

A correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* finds a greater danger than the Hessian fly to the wheat crop in the too abundant growth of autumn. He says:—"When the ground is frozen and the wheat is not covered by snow, evaporation is constantly going on through the leaves. As the wheat root, during the freezing weather, cannot supply moisture, the fields turn brown, the plant dying first at the tip and extending downward. The wheat is not dead in this condition, for with moist weather in spring, it sends up new leaves from the root. But what has grown in the fall, and has turned brown during the winter, is not only of no benefit to the plant, but a positive injury. The old plan of lightly pasturing large wheat in the fall has much to commend it. Even the tramping on the ground when not wot enough to poach, helps the wheat rather than hurts it."