

Soils and Crops

By Agronomist.

This Department is for the use of our farm readers who want the advice of an expert on any question regarding soil, seed, crops, etc. If your question is of sufficient general interest, it will be answered through this column. If stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed with your letter, a complete answer will be mailed to you. Address Agronomist, care of Wilson Publishing Co., Ltd., 73 Adelaide St. W. Toronto.

Time to Save Seed-Corn.

Those who can should go into the fields and select seed-corn as soon as the corn is fully matured and the kernels are well dried. This gives a chance to select the early maturing ears from stand showing vigor and growth. Good average representative ears of the variety, showing uniformly well filled butts and tips, should be chosen. Ears high up on the stalk should not be selected, because they take longer to mature.

Select at least 100 ears for every acre to be planted next year and the year following. This will give a chance for selecting the best in the spring. There should be two good stalks in the hill from which a seed ear is taken.

Select ears nearly as large as the tip at the butt, with straight rows of uniform kernels and with not more than sixteen or eighteen rows of kernels to the ear.

Select ears with kernels that fill all the space on the cob and are about half again as broad at the tip as at the cap. Ears which hang down should be chosen because they shed water. The shank should be of medium length and diameter.

Get the ears dried out as soon as possible after husking. Hard frosts kill the germs in corn that contains a lot of moisture. The ears should be taken inside as soon as husked and kept away from any rain and frost until dried, but should not be dried quickly close to a stove. Free circulation of air is always necessary to dry corn quickly and well. This can be had by hanging the ears with twine or by the husks, or by placing the ears on specially made seed-corn racks.

Well-Packed Silage Keeps Best.

Distributing silage in the silo is frequently neglected. Unless the blower has a distributing attachment there is a tendency for the cut corn to fall in one place in the silo; the finer and lighter portions of the stalks are frequently blown to the outside, and the heavier parts, ears and butts of stalks, are deposited in the centre, thus causing an uneven distribution of grain and stalk and a consequent uneven quality of silage. Uneven distribution is frequently the cause of soft places and air pockets, which later result in spoiled silage. When the lighter portions are blown to the outside they do not pack well and the silage spoils near the wall. Such spoilage is often attributed to the silo.

Packing the silage is equally as important as even distribution. Good silage can be had only by uniform packing and uniform distribution of the corn. The entire surface, especially the outer edge, should be packed firmly.

The large cutter with the corresponding large capacity frequently saves money in filling the silo, but it may result in a waste of the storage capacity of the silo, for if the silo is filled rapidly the corn has little time to settle. Slow filling allows the corn to settle as it is stored, with the result that more corn can be placed in a given space. To overcome this disadvantage of rapid filling woven wire may be extended above the top of the silo, thus increasing its capacity until the silage can settle. Patent roofs are made which serve the same purpose.

Corn cut at the proper stage should require no additional water. When the crop has become too dry, water may be run into the blower of the cutter. Where there is a tractor on the

farm, or in the neighborhood, it can be used to run the silage cutter.

Topics in Season.

The strawberry bed still needs cultivating. Keep busy until the ground freezes. Light frosts do not count.

Dig potatoes on a dry day. As soon as the kernels have fairly hardened it will do to cut corn for grain and fodder.

To control white-grubs, plow the infested soil deeply before October 1, and while plowing turn the poultry or hogs into the field to destroy the grubs.

Lay aside the apples that fall off when you are picking, and do not put them in with the first-grade fruit. The slightest bruise will shorten the keeping qualities.

Try entrusting certain branches of the farm money-handling to the young folks. Say, one has the marketing of the eggs, another buying the grain feed for the stock, and still another the buying of groceries for the household. There is no better way of developing good business qualities.

As soon as our beans are fairly ripe we pull them, stack them around stakes driven into the ground, leave them till dry, then pour them out in a big barrel or tub. If there are not enough to pay for getting out the fanning-mill, they can be cleaned well by pouring them from one dish to another when a strong wind is blowing.

When one-quarter of the kernels of buckwheat are fairly well hardened, get out the harvesting tools. The rest will ripen, and the crop will thus be out of the way of frost.

Harvesting Soybeans.

Where sown merely for hay, soybeans should be cut after the pods are formed and have grown considerably, but before they have matured. If the plants are left until the pods are mature the leaves will shed badly, and the stems will become too hard and woody for the best quality of hay. An ordinary mowing machine with a side delivery attachment or self-rake reaper, or any ordinary mowing-machine without any attachments, can be used. Cure the vines in the swath and windrow as much as possible, finishing up in the cock. Great care should be used so that the vines will be exposed to direct sunlight as little as possible after they have thoroughly wilted in the swath. Otherwise, many of the leaves will shed. Handling should be done, if possible, when the vines are slightly damp.

When soybeans are to be cut for seed as well as for hay, they should be cut after the pods are ripe but before they have dried sufficiently for the beans to pop out. The vines should be cured as already mentioned, reducing the handling to the minimum so that there will be but little, if any, shattering of the beans. After the beans have been thoroughly dried the beans may be threshed out with an ordinary threshing machine, or with a husker and shredder. Usually it will be necessary to reduce the speed so that there will not be any splitting of the beans. After threshing, the beans should be spread out evenly in a dry place where a free circulation of air takes place.

Soybean vines have a high feeding value. Judging from the composition this hay is as rich or richer than alfalfa hay. There is no question but that the stock will relish it as well as any other hay produced on the farm, if cut at the stage of development indicated.

Poultry

Keep the hustlers—those that are on range early and go to roost with full crops.

The high-egg-yield hens usually molt late.

When weeding out flocks a good place to begin is with the hens that are not thrifty and active. Old hens often are better working members of the feathered family than those that are physically weak all the time.

Oats are good feed at any time. They have a fine value, but cannot be fed exclusively. Another good grain is barley. At first the hens may not like kindly to barley, but they soon learn to like it, and it makes eggs and flesh rapidly.

Keep all hens as long as they are profitable. This calls for close attention and the study of each individual hen, but it is work that pays. The man who turns off every hen that reaches the age of two years is pretty sure to sacrifice some of his best layers.

To secure best prices, stock shipped to market should be well fattened so that the breast bone does not stick out like the keel of a boat; the skin should be yellow; the carcass well dressed, cleanly plucked, and not roughed up or torn, free of pin-feathers, and the legs and feet clean.

Like are easily gotten rid of. Three years ago I purchased a five gallon can of heavy auto oil and mixed it with enough so that I could spread it like paint, and gave the roosts a good coating. I repeated the operation every spring and fall, and am now unable to find a louse or the signs of any.

The egg-eating habit can be cured. My method is to break small holes in

each end of an egg and blow out the contents. Then have a druggist put some "stronger" ammonia in the shell and seal up the ends. When the hen cracks the egg the gas is enough to convince her that eggs are uncertain things. It works all right. Try it.

Spots of filth on two or three eggs cost me the custom of one of my best families. Then I turned over a new leaf. I kept my nest boxes as neat as I did the cage of my canary bird. I never take a spotted egg to market. It took me some time to get back my old customer, but I did at last, and still have her.

Drinking fountains that cannot be reached on the inside can be cleaned with scalding water and a big handful of shot. Fill the fountain about quarter full of hot water and then pour in the shot. Shake the vessel briskly so that the shot will scrape along the bottom and sides of the fountain. This will remove the scum and make the vessels clean.

To keep dirt and litter from being scratched into the drinking vessel, stone crocks or galvanized iron pails may be kept on a stand. The fowls will jump up and take their drink without touching the bottom of the vessel. This stand should be about two feet from the ground and the top slatted.

Selling to Automobiles. Signs to attract buyers to roadside markets should be placed several hundred feet on either side of the market place, so that people passing by will be on the lookout. Otherwise, they will pass by before seeing the market place. Word the sign like this: "Apples to sell just ahead."

Woodworking has been made easier by the invention of an electric hand saw.

Making Every Apple Work to the Limit

Twenty-five per cent. of the apples grown in our orchards never reach our tables. In other words, an apple in four is wasted. These waste apples can be used for apple syrup, apple butter, vinegar, etc.; it is merely a matter of making every apple work to the limit. The better the grade of apples the better the product. Windfalls can be used. If partly decayed, cut out the decayed spots. Remove dirt by washing. For cider, apple syrup or vinegar, run the fruit through a cider-mill and extract the juice.

Apple Syrup—To make one gallon of apple syrup, stir into seven gallons of apple cider five ounces of powdered calcium carbonate (carbonate of lime), which is a low-priced chemical, readily obtainable from a drug store. Heat the cider and allow it to boil for a few minutes. As the cider will foam slightly, it is necessary to use a vessel at least one-third larger than the volume of cider. After boiling pour the cider into glass preserving jars and let the liquid settle until perfectly clear. This will take several hours, or overnight. When there is a distinct sediment at the bottom, pour off the clear portion into a preserving kettle, being careful not to pour off any of the sediment. Fill the kettle only one-third full. Add to the clear liquid one level teaspoonful of carbonate of lime and stir thoroughly. Boil the liquid rapidly. If you have a candy thermometer, let the liquid boil until it reaches 220 degrees F. If you have no such thermometer, boil the liquid until only one-seventh of the original volume is left, or until a small portion when cooled rapidly and poured from a spoon is about as thick as maple syrup. When the syrup has reached this point, pour it off into the glass jars and let it cool very slowly. When the syrup has cooled to room temperature there will be a white sediment. When the settling is completed, carefully pour off the clear portion of the syrup into a kettle, heat nearly to boiling, and pour hot into sterilized fruit jars, which should be at once sealed as in preserving. This syrup can be used for puddings, cakes, brown bread, candies, etc.

Cider Apple Butter—Peel and sliced apples may be cooked in the boiled cider to make the butter in one operation, or they may be made first into apple sauce, which is then cooked in the boiled cider. With apples of coarse texture the latter method is no doubt preferable, but both make equally good butter.

Cooking should be continued until the cider and apples do not separate, and the butter, when cold, will be as thick as good apple sauce. The thickness is determined at frequent intervals by cooling small portions. It usually takes about equal quantities of sweet cider and peeled and sliced apples to make butter of the right consistency. Two of the essentials of making good apple butter are long slow cooking (four to six hours) and constant stirring.

If sugar is used, it should be added after the cooking of cider and apples is two-thirds done. About a pound of either white or brown sugar is the usual amount to each gallon of apple butter, but more or less (or not any) may be used, to suit the taste. Apple butter is spiced according to taste, a half teaspoonful each of ground cinnamon, cloves and allspice being used for each gallon. These are stirred into it when the cooking is finished.

While still boiling hot, apple butter should be packed into clean, sterilized glass jars, or hermetically sealed stone jars, with tightly fitting covers, and should be sterilized. Apple Butter without Cider—Good apple butter can be made without

cider. Add enough water to the peeled and sliced apples to make a thin apple sauce, and let this cook very slowly, or simmer, over a low fire for three or four hours. Brown sugar can be used, being added when the cooking is two-thirds done. The sugar which settles at the bottom of a barrel of molasses is excellent for this purpose. A pound a gallon is usually sufficient, but this amount is a matter of taste, as is also the amount of cinnamon, allspice and cloves to be added when cooking is done.

Apple Butter with Grape Juice—If a grape flavor is desired in apple butter, add to each gallon of peeled and sliced apples, cooked into sauce and strained, one pint of grape juice, one cupful of brown sugar, and one-fourth teaspoonful of salt. Cook slowly and stir often for two hours, or until of the desired thickness; then stir in one teaspoonful of cinnamon. Pack the hot butter into hot containers and sterilize.

Apple Butter with Lemons—Slice four lemons, cover with water and let stand over night. Next morning put them into a preserving kettle with eight pounds of apples, pared, cored and sliced. Cook for one hour and add three pounds of sugar. Cook slowly and stir frequently for one and one-half hours longer, or until of proper thickness. Pack hot into sterilized containers and sterilize, or cover with paraffin.

Vinegar—Place the sweet cider as it comes from the press into barrels, which should not be filled more than three-quarters full. The bung of each barrel should be left out and a loose stopper of cotton-batt inserted into the hole. Place the barrels on their sides to expose a large surface of the cider to the air. This is quite essential to rapid vinegar formation.

A few days after the cider is put into the barrels, the characteristic frothing appears at the bung-hole. To give a common expression, it is "beginning to work." This indicates that the first step in the vinegar making process has begun. To help things along add one cake of compressed yeast, stirred up in a little cooled, boiled water, to each five gallons of sweet cider. Keep the cider at a temperature of from 65 deg. to 80 deg. F. If yeast is added and the proper temperature is maintained, the fermentation should be completed in from six weeks to three months.

As soon as the fermentation is completed, draw off the clear liquid, being very careful not to disturb the sediment in the barrel. Wash the barrel thoroughly and replace the liquid.

This done, we are now ready to introduce the acetic-acid germs which change the liquid to vinegar. This can be done by adding from two to four quarts of good cider vinegar containing more or less "mother" for each barrel; but a serious objection to this method is that sometimes one introduces with the "mother" foreign organisms which may prove detrimental to the vinegar. For most satisfactory results use a pure culture of acetic-acid germs and hold the vinegar at a temperature of from 65 deg. to 75 deg. F. Under these conditions saleable vinegar can be obtained in three to six months in place of two to three years, as is often the case. The pure cultures can be obtained from the bacteriologist at your Provincial Experimental Farm, or from commercial supply houses.

When the vinegar becomes sour enough, fill the barrels as full as possible and cork tightly.

In this way, contact of the air with the vinegar is cut off and the acetic acid germs soon cease working.

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By John B. Huber, AMMD

Dr. Huber will answer all signed letters pertaining to Health. If your question is of general interest it will be answered through these columns. If not, it will be answered personally if stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed. Dr. Huber will not prescribe for individual cases or make diagnosis. Address Dr. John B. Huber, M.D., care of Wilson Publishing Co., 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.

Chronic Stomach Trouble.

The chronic gastritis sufferer has a variable appetite, a coated tongue, a bad taste in the mouth. Soon after eating he has, under the breastplate, distress, tenderness, often real pain and a feeling of fullness. Sometimes there is nausea. There is belching of gas and perhaps also of a bitter fluid. From a few minutes to perhaps two hours after eating, there is vomiting; or he brings this on to relieve pain.

In chronic alcoholic gastritis, the nausea, retching and vomiting are after breakfast. The abdomen is often distended, especially after meals, and there is constipation or diarrhoea; and there is distress, oftentimes pain, in the abdomen. Headache, lassitude, lack of capacity for work, mental depression are common. And there result, in time, blood poverty and loss of weight.

When the stomach contents are examined, irregularities in the quantity and proportions of the gastric juice, hydrochloric acid, pepsin, rennin and other substances essential to healthy digestion, are found, with usually much, sometimes enormous, quantities of slimy mucus, which has been coating the stomach and preventing the right and beneficent action on the food of the digestants mentioned. Thus there is slow digestion of the food, and slow absorption of the substances digested, and this occasions the fermentation of the stomach contents and the impairment of the stomach muscle function.

Such sufferers keep on month after month, year after year, periods of real bed-sickness alternating with fairly comfortable seasons, but never in real health. They find this and that much vaunted remedy to help a little. They are always taking medicines—such as oftentimes contain a large percentage of alcohol—just as

if medicines were made to live on. But no cure is achieved.

The only sensible way to cure chronic gastritis is to go to a good family doctor, and have him examine the stomach contents—which are procured one hour after a test breakfast of weak tea and a bit of dry toast. If he is not himself expert at this, have him refer you to a good stomach specialist. Only in that way can the doctor (and the patient) know "where they are at"; only thus, in many cases, can the diagnosis of cancer or ulcer or other grave stomach ailment be counted out. The cause being found thus, the right remedy can be applied. By far the best remedy for appropriate cases of chronic gastritis is the washing out of the stomach by the family doctor, the patient "swallowing the hose pipe" as the jocosely saying is. It is really amazing what an awful mess a few washings bring away; and equally amazing the amount of relief felt, far surpassing that afforded by tons of medicine—relief so great that patients sometimes learn how to do gastric lavage upon themselves, in their own homes, and with the greatest satisfaction.

Questions and Answers.

Is there much food value in a soup made of small beans and pieces of ready-made dough?

Answer—Not much food value in the dough, but considerable in the beans, which are rich in protein—that is, body-building material.

Is neurasthenia a condition of the nervous system or the mind? Answer—Neurasthenia is exhaustion of the nervous system generally—brain, spinal cord, bodily nerves and ganglia all together. When we mean mental exhaustion only, we speak of psychasthenia.

Home-Made Javelle Water.

Dissolve ½ pound of chloride of lime in 2 quarts of water. Pour off the top, which will be clear, and add to the clear liquid 1 quart of liquid soda. Keep in tightly corked bottles in a dark place and use only for stains on white goods.

All refuse of crops that are through fruiting should be burned as soon as dry enough. Cabbage stumps, cucumbers, melons, tomatoes and the like should not be left to decay.

Swiss chard is an economical vegetable, for the fresh leaves may be used for salad and the stems until tender and then served creamed on toast, like asparagus, for a supper.

A few tender little carrots and onions should be combined with it when served this last way.

The Uses of Adversity.

"I wish I could slide along in business as easily as George Seagrave," said John Nelson, as he joined his father in the library after dinner.

"What's up now?" asked his father.

"Oh, nothing," replied the son, only George has just been appointed assistant general manager of his father's firm. It doesn't seem right for a fellow to have an advantage like that given to him, while fellows like me have to dig for everything they get."

"But that seems to be the way the world is made, John, and the more I see of it the more I'm convinced it's a capital arrangement. I used to feel as you do, but I've lived long enough to see a great many things adjust themselves. There is a law of compensation at work, my boy, and no class has all the advantages. It would be a very poor world if we all slid along as easily as George does."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the son.

"Just this: it takes opposition or hardship, or whatever you please to call it, to bring out the best in us and make us good for anything. You know the old saying, 'It's three generations from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves.' A man goes out in his shirt sleeves and gets his living, but he decides that his children shall have more opportunity than he, so he gives them an education. The sons make money by their educational advantage, and they pass it on to their sons, who have never known the struggle of acquisition. The sons' sons go through it. And so the shirt-sleeve process begins again. It doesn't always happen so, but it happens with sufficient regularity to form the basis of a proverb. The exception proves the rule."

"Yes, but it needn't be so," replied the boy.

"I know that," replied the father, "but there is enough truth in it to prove what I want to say. Even God himself put the Jews through the process of adversity to whip them into shape. It was only about four hundred miles in a bee line across the wilderness. But God made the Jews take forty years to get to Canaan, because He wanted to toughen them and make them ready for the conquest, when He got them there. The Bible says He 'led them through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.' They would have got there too quickly to stand the hardship. And if they had defeated the Philistines, they would have been unprepared for a still worse enemy; I mean the opulence and plenty of Canaan."

"Men are defeated by easy victories and cheap successes more than by adversity. Disraeli was hissed down in the British Parliament when he made his maiden speech. But that only toughened his fibre and stiffened his resolve. It makes all the difference whether a closed door is a final rebuff or an invitation to battle through. I'm more afraid of a cheap and easy success for you than I am of struggle. If you struggle before you achieve, you will have character to hold your steady when success arrives. The trouble with many persons is that they have no character to go with their acquisitions. It is a case of diamonds on dirty fingers."

"Have you never seen an engine pounding itself to pieces on a slippery rail in winter? What it needed was sand, opposition. Friction spelled progress. Even a kite can't rise with the wind. It must ascend against it. Don't spend your time quarrelling with the order of things or fretting about some one else's easy success. An oak grows in the open, tortured by a thousand storms. The hothouse plant never knows the glory of the sky."

Roadside Markets.

Along a few of the main traveled highways the roadside market is a new development of the past two or three years. On a recent trip I saw these markets on farm after farm. Some of them were quite pretentious with a fine display of fruit, vegetables and eggs, and an attendant in charge. Others consisted only of a few baskets of tomatoes or fruit with a "for sale" sign and the price tacked to a post.

The possibilities in the roadside market are limited only by the location of the farm, and the ability of the farmer to produce and display attractively those good things of the farm that meet the requirements of the city consumer. Every year more town folks are getting the habit of running out into the country in their automobiles and buying their vegetables, fruit, poultry and egg supplies direct from the farmer. It is a trade worth cultivating.

The Looms of Arras.

Upon the looms of Arras The weavers wrought of old In many a fine and fair design Of crimson and of gold.

Unto the looms of Arras But yesterday there came The grisly weaver War, who wove With ruthless hands of flame.

Around and over Arras He spread his web of glooms, And yet he could not rule her Of the marvel of her looms!

A one-egg cake baked in a biscuit pan and cut in squares, then served hot with foamy sauce, is a good dessert.

The Dairy

The number of daughters a bull has in the advanced registry is not sufficient measure of his value as a breeder. Neither can his value be measured by a few high producing daughters. High average production in all his daughters is the final measure, and that can not be determined by using the bull two or three years. Four years are needed to measure the value of any bull.

Sheep Notes

Early fall is the time to start a flock of sheep. Get some good grade ewes and a purebred ram, or some bred ewes. A beginner should grow into the business; eight or ten ewes are enough to start with. Flush ewes are best bred by giving them green food such as alfalfa pasture. This stimulates the sexual capacity and is favorable to a higher percentage of twins.

Storing Grain Bags.

On the majority of farms it is very hard to keep sacks or grain bags free from the ravages of mice and rats. Several years ago they could be bought for about one-third the present price. Hence it pays to guard them. A very good way is to secure a can similar to the tin cracker cans, which can be secured at grocery stores. A can should be eighteen or twenty-four inches in diameter and three or four feet high. Put in your sacks, put on the lid. Mice and rats will not gnaw through, and your problem is solved.

Fish will not be greasy or sodden if the fat in which it is fried is almost boiling hot when the fish is put in. Bristle brushes may be kept in the best order by washing in lukewarm soapwater to which a little ammonia has been added.

THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

The pessimists spread gloom about They always hold such dreary views— They should be quarantined I think So other folks won't catch their blues.

