

HORTICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

(Under this heading all questions relating to flowers or horticulture will be answered.)

THE GARDEN.

THE severe weather having delayed gardening operations, it is necessary to commence work for the coming season at once. Garden walks should be put in order and all re-gravelling done; well rolled and a hard, smooth surface secured; lawns rolled and verges cut and trimmed. Vacant ground should be manured and dug over without delay. Get your seeds as early as possible, and procure them from a reliable firm; see that they are bright in color and new, or it will be sure to end in disappointment. It is a good plan to put a few seeds in small plots to test their germinating qualities. A row of peas may now be put in; plant parsnips in drills on deeply dug and well manured ground. A first sowing of lettuce and radish on a warm border should now be made. Young plants of cabbage and early cauliflower in frames should be well looked to as they will be wanted next month. Those who have not prepared their frames should at once obtain a load of stable manure, which should be well shaken and turned at least two or three times (say every third day). Keep the heap in a conical shape, otherwise it will heat too fiercely and not retain for long a nice heat. I will continue directions for frame work next week. Asparagus beds should be forked, lightly cleaned, and well mulched, with decomposed manure only. All planting of young fruit trees and moving of shrubs and trees should be finished and pruning brought to a close as early as possible. The pot flowers should be looked over and dead leaves removed, and where required repotted in previously prepared soil. This is a good time to take chrysanthemum cuttings. In my next paper I will give a selection of the best seed to plant and a few remarks on pruning small fruits.

J. W. WEBB.

Fern Hill, Boleskine Road, Feb. 22.

DIRECTIONS FOR PLANTING TREES.

The ground for an orchard should be dry subsoil or should be well under-

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drained. The ground should be well plowed and harrowed. For ordinary sized trees dig the holes about twenty inches square and twelve inches deep; fill up till the tree, when set, will be about two inches deeper than when it stood in the nursery. In setting, spread the roots in their natural position, sift finely pulverized dirt well round them and press tightly with the hand. After setting, it is advisable to mulch old straw, or manure is better. Grain of any kind should not be sowed in a young orchard. Several crops of vegetables could be raised before the trees come into bearing, which would insure the cultivation of the trees and also be remunerative to the orchardist.

APPLES.

No fruit is more universally liked or generally used than the apple. It is exceedingly wholesome, and the finest sorts are much esteemed for dessert, and the little care required in its culture renders it the most abundant of all fruits in temperate climates. As the earlier sorts ripen in June and the latest can be preserved until that season, it may be considered as a fruit in perfection the whole year. Besides its merit for dessert, the value of the apple is still greater for the kitchen and in sauces, pies, tarts, preserves and jellies, and roasted or stewed this fruit is the constant and invaluable resources of the kitchen. The apple will grow on a great variety of soils, but it seldom thrives on very dry lands or soils saturated with moisture. Its favorite soil is a strong loam of a limestone nature. The apple is peculiarly adapted to Vancouver Island. In the East it takes from six to seven years for the trees to come into bearing, while here we expect them to bear the third or fourth year.

MULCHING.

This is properly done by placing a layer of coarse manure or litter about three to six inches deep about the tree, extending one to two feet further in each direction than the roots. This keeps the ground moist of an equal temperature, renders watering unnecessary, and is in all respects preferable to it. Trees properly mulched are more certain to live and make much greater growth than those which are not so treated.

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Having entered into an arrangement with the proprietors of this journal to open a cultural and floral department, and, at the same time, to do away with the existing prices paid for fruit trees and bushes of all kinds, which have always been considered an obstacle to the planting of orchards to extent in British Columbia, and, further, has been detrimental in the settling up of country, and, at the same time, one of the strongest arguments we have had to offer with in the sale of fruit lands.

Right here on Vancouver Island exist possible natural conditions for a great diversity of fruit growing—apples, pears, cherries, prunes, gooseberries, currants, raspberries, strawberries and blackberries grow better than in California. They ripen later in season, true enough, but ours is a better size of the California raised prune. It has more meat in comparison to the stone. I would advise the growing of the prune, what money can be made out of a small orchard is astonishing, and there is no danger of glutting the market. If all available land on Vancouver Island was planted out in prunes it would not commence to supply the needs of Canada.

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POULTRY DEPARTMENT.

(Under this heading, all questions relating to poultry will be answered.)

THAT poultry raising, as a profitable industry, is receiving more of the attention it deserves was clearly demonstrated at the exhibition, both by the quality and condition of the birds and by the increased attendance, which was nearly treble that of last year. Though the entries were about three hundred short of last year, yet a gratifying improvement was noticed in the strictly business varieties—Leghorns, Plymouth Rocks and Cochins, with Indian Game and Wyandottes about stationary.

The annual meeting of the British Columbia Poultry, Dog and Pet Stock Association was held on the evening of the 14th inst, about forty enthusiastic fanciers being present. The election of officers was the principal business transacted, and resulted as follows: President, Lieut.-Governor Dewdney; vice-president, George Jay; secretary, W. Scott Chambers; treasurer, W. McKeon, Jr.; executive—M. Miller, R. P. McLennan, Dr. J. Duncan, R. Merritt, B. Boggs, Dr. Milne, B. B. Moore, J. B. Carmichael, Rev. F. W. Fox.