

## The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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### What of the Wheat Outlook?

Ontario and Eastern Canada is essentially a live-stock country. Last year, owing to the war and the increased price of cereals, grain growing, particularly wheat production got a "boost." Last fall the weather was so bad that comparatively little winter wheat was put in in most districts. Possibly it is well that it is so. Ontario winter wheat is now quoted at less than \$1 per bushel, and the farmer, with live stock at present prices, can ill afford to sell the grain at that price. But what of the outlook? The war is still on, but the tide seems to be rapidly changing. It may or may not be over before the harvest of 1917. We are not going to speculate on the war. However, it seems that there is plenty of wheat, and prices are not likely to go abnormally high. Russia has a large supply held over. The Argentine has a bumper crop, and nowhere to send it on account of lack of transports. If any of the Allies needed wheat, or foresaw a shortage, Britain, in command of the seas, would see that some of this wheat reached them. In Great Britain the trend of wheat and grain prices is gradually downward, while beef has gone the other way to beyond 20 cents per pound, on foot. It would appear that it is meat and not grain that is needed. The Western crop promises another "bumper" yield this year, which, if it is harvested in good condition, will mean more wheat for the Allies.

We are simply relating this that our readers may understand conditions. Too often all the stress is placed by speakers on the necessity for more wheat. We need the grain more to feed live stock than to feed man at the present, and the question arises as to whether winter wheat or some of the coarse grains or corn is more profitable. Now is a good time to consider this, just before plowing up that clover sod for winter wheat. Of course, no one would discourage wheat production. Many farmers gain by having a fall-sown field. Wheat does well on a rich summer-fallow or a rich clover sod, and sometimes gives a good yield on a manured barley stubble, but any attempt at a widely-increased acreage of winter wheat in Ontario this year should be well thought

over before launched. It would not surprise us to see after-the-war wheat prices below 60 cents per bushel. Seventy cents may be the outside figure. The question is, which is worth more: a good crop of oats, barley or corn for feed, or a crop of wheat at a low price?

A field of winter wheat has several advantages for the one-hundred or two-hundred-acre farmer. It is in when the spring rush comes. It gives a good yield of straw, fine for bedding. It is a good crop with which to seed down to clover, alfalfa or mixed hay. It divides the work of the cereal harvest. It is a good crop for well-prepared, suitable soil. For these reasons the usual acreage is justified, but any attempt to increase the acreage and to sow land not particularly well prepared and suitable for winter wheat production should be weighed in the balance before decided upon. There seems to be an abundance of wheat available for the Allied nations. When the tied-up supplies are released after the war, prices are likely to bump down. On the whole it will pay the Ontario farmer to grow grain for feed. If he decides that wheat pays well for this, let him grow wheat. If other grains and other crops can be used to better advantage, by all means grow them. There seems to be wheat in abundance, but live stock is not so plentiful.

### Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

So many spiders build webs that we are rather prone to think of all spiders as constructing these nets for the capture of their prey. There are, however, a number of species which build no webs at all, but catch their prey either by stalking it or by lying in wait for it. One of the species which adopts this latter method of procedure is the Crab Spider. The female of this species measures, when full grown, from one-third to one-half inch in length. She is milk-white or yellow in color, and usually has a light crimson band on each side of the abdomen. The male is only one-eighth to one-sixth of an inch in length, and has two parallel lines of dark spots and a dark stripe on each side of the abdomen. This spider is remarkable for the change in color which takes place when it migrates from flowers of one color to those of another color. In the spring and early summer it is most frequently found on the Canadian Violet, White Trillium, Dutchman's Breeches, White Fleabane, Dwarf Cornel and other white flowers. Its color is then white, which renders it so inconspicuous that the insects visiting these flowers in search of nectar or pollen do not perceive it, and it thus captures them more readily. Later in the season it migrates to the Goldenrod, and other yellow flowers, and it then becomes yellow. I have found the white form on the Showy Lady's-slipper, and the yellow form on the Larger Yellow Lady's-slipper in the same bog and at the same time. It has been proved experimentally that it takes one of these spiders from ten to eleven days to change from white to yellow on being placed on a yellow flower. The egg-sac of this species is made upon a leaf, and is protected by folding a part of the leaf over and fastening it down with a sheet of silk.

The Crab Spiders are so called on account of the short and broad form of the body, the crab-like attitude in which the front legs are held, and the fact that they walk more readily sideways or backwards than forwards.

Now that the season is approaching in which the worst bush-fires occur, we should try to realize the immense damage done every year by these fires and resolve to do everything in our power to prevent this loss. More than 12,000 forest fires, large and small, occur in Canada every year, and these fires burn down three or four times as much of our timber as is cut by the lumberman. Imagine trampling down four times as much of your grain crop as you haul to the barn! The two cases are parallel, except that the loss of a timber crop costs enormously more to replace. It means that millions of dollars, in which you and your family should share, are passing into smoke. You cannot bring back a burned forest in a year, nor yet in a life-time, as mature timber takes from sixty to a hundred years to develop. And the main thing to remember is that the very large majority of these fires are preventable, they are due to carelessness—down-right, wanton, criminal carelessness. Certain parts of the United States, and all of Switzerland and France scarcely know what a big forest blaze looks like. Why? Because the people and their legislators have made up their minds that a forest fire is a common thief, that it robs the woodsman of his employment, robs the farmer of his markets, causes alternate flooding and drying up of the streams, and raises the cost of lumber for every citizen in the land. If the \$200,000,000 which the Canadian forests pour into the pockets of the country every year were taken away, every community would cry "hard times," and at the present annual rate of destruction by fire it does not take a very long look ahead to see the end of this asset. When the people of Canada realize that the man who sets a forest on fire is a

dangerous criminal and that he should be treated as such, forest fires will be practically eliminated.

A society to encourage the study of the fleshy Fungi has recently been formed in Toronto. The aims of this association are set forth as follows: The collection and tabulation economically and scientifically of edible and inedible-fungi (mushrooms) by means of specimens, photographs, spore-prints and field notes. The preparation, printing and distribution of a simple and uniform set of field notes for collectors. To interest and educate the general public in many kinds of edible fungi as a valuable food, tons of which annually go to waste, and to make easy and certain the recognition of the few poisonous and dangerous species by means of exhibitions, lectures and publications, and further facilitate the study of useful and destructive fungi of all kinds. To promote and conduct excursions for study and collection of mushrooms in the fields and woods. To hold meetings of the society to which the public will be invited in furtherance of these aims. And to maintain a library and museum where the best obtainable literature may be available, and the best methods of study followed by those who may become interested in the study of fungi.

There is a very wide and useful field of operations open to such a society, and we wish them all success in their endeavors. The exhibitions and lectures will only be of use to the people of the immediate vicinity, but by means of their publications and by acting as a headquarters for the determination of specimens they can be of service to the Dominion at large.

## THE HORSE.

### Putting the Final Touches on Horses for the Show.

The success of horses in the show-ring depends upon different factors, as type, condition, style, action, speed in certain classes and manners. The prospective exhibitor must first decide the class in which he will exhibit. This will depend upon the horse's size, type and action. The only difficulty he has in heavy horses is to decide whether his colt, horse or team should be shown in the draft or agricultural class. The horses of these classes are identical, except in regard to weight. In the larger shows 1,600 lbs. is considered the minimum weight for a draft horse, and those between about 1,400 or 1,450 and 1,600 lbs. are agricultural horses. In most of the rural exhibitions the minimum for the draft horse is 1,500 lbs., and below that to 1,300 or 1,350 are agricultural. In these classes it will easily be seen that a few pounds more or less of flesh will change a horse from one class to the other. In the lighter classes of horses it is often more difficult to correctly classify. In classifying the light harness or road horse, and the heavy harness or carriage horse, more difficulty is often experienced. In such cases action is the main factor. Of course, we recognize certain types as roadster type and certain types as carriage type, but we often see two horses of similar type and perhaps similar breeding, that, when standing, look like a well-matched team, but when in action one shows the typical carriage or heavy harness horse action, and the other typical roadster or light harness horse action. In such cases action must decide irrespective of type and size. In the saddle class, type will, in most cases, decide, as a typical saddler seldom disappoints us in action. He has action peculiar to his class, rather close to the ground, elastic and springy, not the flash action of the heavy harness horse, nor the speed of the light harness horse, but an easy, graceful, rather low, but safe action at all paces. The combination horse is a medium between the saddler and the heavy harness horse in action, hence he gives good satisfaction in either harness or saddle.

In preparing a horse or a pair for show purposes it is necessary to decide the class, and during the preparation the driver or rider should endeavor to intensify the peculiar characteristics of style and action demanded in the class. The general condition of the horse, as regards flesh and coat, can be acquired by careful feeding and regular grooming, provided he is not worked, driven or ridden enough to keep him low in flesh. Excessively fat horses, even in the heavy classes, do not show as well as those in only moderate flesh. The too common idea that it is necessary to give drugs to horses to fit them for show purposes is a mistake, and often harmful. A healthy horse needs no drugs to put him in condition. A reasonable amount of good hay, oats, bran and a little linseed meal, thorough grooming, at least twice daily, and regular exercise, but not sufficient work or exercise to tire him will soon get him in condition with a good coat and sufficient flesh. During exercise pains should be taken to make him as perfect as possible in the desirable style of action demanded in his class. In the heavy classes, of course, it is very important that he be a good walker, and go well at a slow trot, that he backs well, and stands well.

In the heavy harness or carriage horse considerable care should be taken to ascertain the proper weight of shoe, for both fore and hind feet, that he requires to cause him to show to as extreme a degree as possible the intensive flash action desired. In order to do this it is sometimes necessary to change his shoes a few times. The horse that goes high, flash and fast with shoes of ordinary weight is preferable to one that re-