

# THE CANADA FARMER

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NEW SERIES.

## The Field.

### Securing Roots.

Fodder is now, and in all probability will during the coming winter be scarce; the greater care should then be exercised to secure safely all root crops.

POTATOES are taken up in two ways, either by means of the plough or with the potato fork or "grapes." For neatness and thoroughness of work no implement that we have seen can surpass the potato fork; but where the land is light, a crop may be lifted well and quickly by means of the plough.

We consider that all potatoes should be dug as soon as thoroughly ripe, that is, as soon as the tops can be detached by pulling from the bulbs. They should be left upon the surface of the ground, if the weather be open, until the earth upon them is perfectly dry. Upon lighter lands two hours will often suffice for this purpose. They should then be piled or pitted in small heaps containing from 20 to 40 bushels, and left to sweat until there be danger of injury by frost. This sweating process has to be undergone somewhere, and it is far better that it should take place in small heaps outside than when stored in large quantities in a cellar.

If potatoes are to be left out through our long Canadian winter in pits, great care should be exercised in the formation and covering of the heaps. We are no advocates for large pits. We consider 50 bushels to be the best size, and our reasons for so thinking are: That our risk of loss by excess of heat or frost is thus reduced to a minimum; that such is a handy sized pit to open and pick over during the snatches of fine weather that we may have in winter or early spring; and that 50 bushels just about make a convenient waggon load.

Lay the heap upon a very light bottom of straw, just sufficient to keep the root from contact with the earth. Pile up neatly; cover with a foot of loose straw and six inches of

earth firmly compacted with the spade. Build in a ventilator, and leave it until the very severe weather sets in. Long ere that time the potatoes will have been thoroughly sweated. Then take away the ventilator and make all snug.

**CARROTS.**—The best manner to take these up is to pass the land side of a narrow sharp cutting plough close along the rows, after which the root grasped by the haulm is easily pulled out. Throw into rough heaps, and top at convenience.

Carrots will keep during winter in cellars at the same temperature as turnips, ranging from 32° to 36°. The temperature should not be allowed to rise above the latter, nor to sink below freezing point; but the nearer we can keep to 32° the safer will the crop be from spoiling.

In passing we would recommend every farmer to hang one or more thermometers in his root cellar. They can be bought at 50 cents apiece, and the cost is well repaid by the knowledge that our cellars are neither too hot nor letting in the frost. In entering a cellar from the outer air upon a cold winter's day, it is impossible to tell what is the temperature inside by the feel. An atmosphere in which the temperature is at 26° will feel warm after leaving the open air, where the thermometer stands in the neighbourhood of zero.

**TURNIPS.**—Pull these in time. Many of our farmers are too greedy, too anxious to leave their turnips in the ground at the risk of loss by frost and snow, and thus gain a few pounds or may be bushels upon the acre. A crop of 500 bushels per acre, well and dryly secured, is more valuable than one of 600 put into cellar or pit covered with wet soil.

We believe in the old-fashioned method of pulling by hand and topping and tailing. Trimming turnips should be carefully performed. Cutting the top too far from the turnips leaves the root far more liable to sprout at that part, whereas cutting into the body of the turnip is very injurious, as rot-

ting is very apt to set in where the bulb has been cut into. It is quite a knack to strike a happy medium between these two faults in topping, and the farmer should see that this operation is properly performed.

There are other more expeditious ways of raising "heaps." One by ploughing them out. This we consider a dirty job, and utterly unfit for the consideration of farmers. Others go over a field with a sharp hoe, and cut off the tops as they stand in the field; then take a pair of ordinary iron-toothed harrows, and draw them across the rows, once over and back again. The first stroke loosens the turnip, the second takes it completely out, and the teeth do not injure the roots.

This is doubtless a far more untidy method than that of pulling by hand; but where a scarcity of hands and great hurry call for expedition, we know it to be perfectly practicable, as we confess to having pulled turnips in this manner. The objections to the plan are, however, numerous. We make a great mess of our tops; we are apt to cover up many medium-sized turnips in the leaves so as to lose them when gathering, and we do not cut the tails. The latter matters little upon sandy land, as if a shoot with a bottom made of slats be used in unloading, most of the tails break off, and all the dirt is shaken out ere the turnip reaches the cellar window. This process is only practicable upon the lighter soils.

In pitting turnips, we should make our pits long and narrow. Six inches of straw and six of earth is the covering used by many of our greatest turnip growers. There are various methods of ventilating, and we would close this article by mentioning that adopted by Mr. Weir, of Flamboro' West, who, himself a great and most successful turnip raiser, laid the following plan before the Ancaster Farmers' Club last winter. He says:—"I cover the whole heap with six inches of loose straw, then, commencing at the one end, I cover six feet in length with six inches of earth. I then leave four feet covered by a