

Back Yard Gardens

Simple Instructions for Those Interested in Doing Their Part to Increase Production

The accompanying plan for a small garden is intended as a guide to those desiring to make a beginning but who do not know quite how to go about it. It is not expected that the plan will be followed absolutely, as some may not wish to grow everything mentioned here, while others may desire to add some vegetables which are not included in this plan. The endeavour has been to make the

into the best physical condition possible,* that is, have it finely pulverized before planting the seeds. Free the soil from rocks, sticks, large clods, straw matter, etc. If the soil is heavy clay it will be improved by adding a little sand and some well rotted manure. It is better that the soil be ploughed or spaded in the fall. If, however, it has not been previously worked up, apply rotted manure if available and turn the soil well over in the spring, and, if in soil, turn the soil well under and pack down. Then prepare a fine seed bed on the surface.

Sowing—The harder seeds such as peas, spinach, radishes, lettuce, carrots and onions may be sown as early as the ground is ready.

three inches apart, beans to four inches and peas to one inch apart. Corn may be planted in hills about three feet apart and thinned to three or four good plants to a hill. Cucumbers may be planted in the south row of corn between the hills and thinned to two or three plants in each space.

The crops here mentioned are likely to be successful with the amateur gardener, and as he gains experience he will be able to plan and manage a garden which will more fully suit his location and the requirements of his table.

A border of flowers will add much to the attractiveness of the back-yard and may be arranged according to individual taste. A garden the size of the one here shown, if on good soil and properly cared for, will yield an abundant supply of fresh vegetables for the table of an average family during the entire growing season.

Residents of cities, towns and municipalities going in for vegetable culture should send to the Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, for one or more of these publications:

No. 49—The Potato and Its Culture, by W. T. Macoun.

No. 5—Asparagus, Celery and Onion Culture, by W. T. Macoun.

No. 10—Tomato Culture, by W. T. Macoun.

No. 11—Cabbage and Cauliflower Culture, by W. T. Macoun.

Nos. 7 and 8, Profitable Field Root Varieties, by F. G. Brown.

Also the bulletin entitled The Vegetable Garden, dealing with the cultivation of tomatoes, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, melons, watermelons, cucumbers, beets, squash, pumpkins, carrots, parsnips, turnips, salsify (or oyster plant), radishes, peas, beans, corn, eggplant, peppers, spinach, lettuce, parsley, sweet herbs, asparagus and rhubarb.—F. C. N.

Selection of Seed Potatoes

Of all the factors in potato growing, selection of seed is by far the most important. Had we bred our Shorthorn cattle as many of us have been in the habit of selecting and breeding our seed potatoes, we would now have no breed of Shorthorns. If we used only the culls and scrubs to breed from, our breeds of stock would soon run out. It has been careful selection and the application of scientific principles of breeding that has brought our pure bred live stock up to the present high standard. One reason why potatoes on many farms in this country have degenerated is that culls, screenings and small potatoes have been planted.

If no method of selection has hitherto been followed, the seed for this year's crop will have to be taken from the bin. Potatoes which are of medium size, smooth, free from disease and true to the type of the variety being sown, should be selected. During the

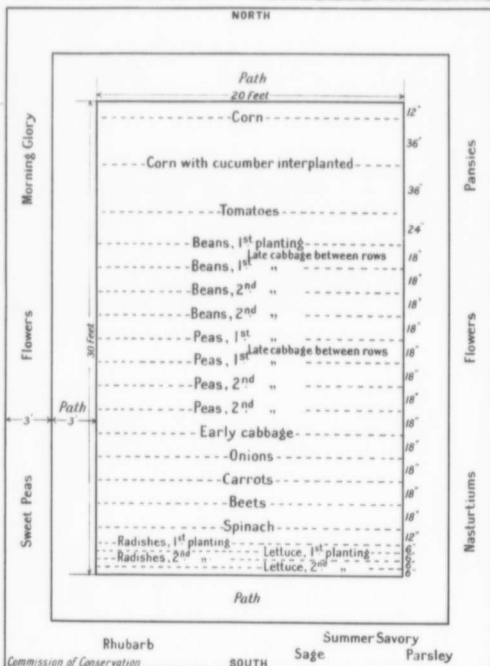
late summer or early autumn when the vines are beginning to die down, the best and most vigorous hills should be marked by putting down a small stake or twig. The hills showing most vigour of vegetation will usually give the best yield of tubers. When the crop is harvested, any poor hills among those marked should be discarded and the rest saved for next year's planting. One farmer doing illustration work for the Commission of Conservation planted potatoes thus selected and ordinary potatoes side by side. When harvested four rows from the selected seed yielded ten bushels per row, while the four rows on either side of the ordinary seed yielded seven and one half bushels per row. This was a gain in yield of 33 per cent.

This method of selection does not take much time and, as repeated experiments have shown it to be the means of substantial increases in yield, it should be more generally practised.—F. C. N.

Canada's Fire Losses

With a fire loss averaging over two million dollars per month, or sixty-seven thousand dollars per day, the fire situation in Canada has reached the stage where some steps must be taken toward discovering the cause and evolving some means for a large reduction of this annual toll. Fire commissioners agree that a large proportion of fires are of deliberately incendiary origin, that a still larger percentage are of unconsciously incendiary, and that a not inconsiderable number are the result of carelessness or neglect. The number of fires resulting from causes beyond human control constitutes almost a negligible quantity in the year's total. How this situation should be handled is a difficult question. The law prescribes punishment for arson, but, under present conditions and with the machinery available, it is exceedingly difficult to secure convicting evidence. The insurance companies, being private corporations, cannot be expected to prosecute; unless the amount at issue is sufficiently large and the evidence is conclusive, it is cheaper for them to pay the loss than to contest it.

The police departments of our cities are not interested in fires unless it be shown that there are suspicious circumstances surrounding the occurrence. Even should this be demonstrated, there are no trained men connected with the police forces qualified to thoroughly investigate the circumstances. The Ontario legislature at its session in 1914 passed an Act to appoint a fire marshal, whose duty it would be to study the question of the annual fire loss. He would also have power to investigate fires which were deemed of suspicious nature and to prosecute where necessary. No further action has yet been taken under this legislation, and the appointment of a fire marshal is still in abeyance.



design simple and with few paths. This plan is made for a lot 33 feet wide and of sufficient depth back of the house to allow about 40 feet of land for garden purposes. Larger lots can be arranged according to the space available and size of garden required.

The crops should be arranged to have the slope, as pertains to height of crop, towards the south. That is, the tall vegetables, as corn, should be at the north, while the low-growing plants should be at the south, to allow as much sunlight as possible to enter.

Seeds—It always pays to get the best seed. Buy from a reliable firm.

Soil Preparation—Put the soil

The tender seeds such as corn, cucumbers and beans should not be planted until the ground is warm and the danger from frost is past. When planting, cover seeds uniformly and then firm the soil over them. This hastens germination. Lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots and onions may be covered one-half inch in depth, beets one inch; while corn, beans, peas and cucumbers may be sown from one and one-half to two inches deep. Sow plenty of seed and thin out after the plants are up.

Thinning—Spinach need not be thinned. Beets may be thinned to about three inches apart, and those thinned out used as greens. Carrots may be thinned to two or