

Encouraged thereby, he planted five acres on ordinary or rather thin soil, and has not gathered an average crop in three seasons. A city florist and tree jobber planted four Doolittle Raspberry plants where a compost heap had lain. The growth was extraordinary; they were twice pinched back and one of the plants produced sixty-one canes that reached the ground and took root.

The experience of J. M. Smith, of Wisconsin, of Peter Henderson and others, is that the ground that is full of humus and the unused portions of manure used in vegetable gardening is the best for heavy crops of strawberries.

On account of the white grub it is necessary to plant sod ground two years in hoed crops to give this pest a chance to get out of the way, and the common practice is to manure in the spring that the strawberries are planted, or more frequently not manure at all. I am convinced that ordinary manuring just before planting does not pay in proportion to the cost, as in the nature of things much of it does not become available until too late to help the growth. It is far better to manure heavily the crops of corn and potatoes in the years of preparation, and thus get a double recompense. All berry men agree that the first crop of strawberries is the one to work for, and the extraordinary yield of two hundred bushels and upward per acre is only obtained by the most careful attention to all those details that give the highest yields of ordinary farm crops.

In fitting the ground, it is best to begin early, first ploughing deeply, then pulverizing finely, and finally floating down flat with a plank finisher or boat. When the earliest farmers plough for oats then fit the ground, even if it is a month or six weeks before planting. Weeds will start, but a sweep of the trowel removes those where the plant is to be placed, and cultivation between the rows can commence at once, destroying the weeds and aerating the soil.

The poorest part of a fruit farm may be planted in blackberries, with a dead certainty that the land will improve in quality, and that the berries will be less subject to winter-killing. If desirable the ground can be top-dressed at any time afterward, by leaving the manure in piles in the cross-paths and distributing with a hand-cart or wheelbarrow. The blackberry not only sends its roots all through the soil, but has large and abundant leaves which hang on until early winter snows bear them to the ground, where wet and heavy they never blow away, but lie to form a mulch and aid in the nutrification of the soil. In this way the blackberry not only holds its own, but slowly gains on the soil.