

Soils and Crops

This Department is for the use of our farm readers who want the advice of an expert on any question regarding soil, seed, crops, etc. If your question is of sufficient general interest, it will be answered through this column. If stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed with your letter, a complete answer will be mailed to you. Address: Agronomist, care of Wilson Publishing Co., Ltd., 73 Adelaide St. W., Toronto.

NEVER BURN HUMUS-MAKING MATERIAL

Too many of us are quite thoughtless about the use of fires on the farm. Fires, on the average farm, do far more harm than good.

Everyone who burns stuff in the field or woodlot does it because he believes he is destroying either weed seeds or useless rubbish. This attitude is all right, provided we revise our definition of rubbish and get a clearer notion of the methods by which weed seeds are distributed.

It is quite rare to find any amount of weed seeds, especially of the more obnoxious weeds, still in the seed heads and up from the ground sufficiently to be burned by the usual spring fire.

In fact, one of the chief reasons why certain weeds have been dubbed "noxious" is because they have developed, during many generations, the ability to survive the various adverse conditions and rough treatments to which the farmer has subjected them.

Usually the amount of vegetable matter destroyed when stubble or other growth is burned over in the spring to kill weed seeds would do far greater service if plowed under to help the corn or other crop to outgrow the weeds.

Do Not Rob The Land

I have known of many cases where stubble ground which was to be put into oats or some cultivated crop was burned over for the sole purpose of making plowing appear easier! The man who robs land in that way, even if the land is his own, ought to be indicted for robbery and prosecuted to the full extent of the law! Such willful destruction of the most vital element in the maintenance of soil fertility and tilth is certainly criminal, not only against the present but against future generations. It is this disregard for the preservation and turning under of humus making materials which has done more than anything else to cause the abandonment of so many farms in older sections of the country—this is what causes the land to "run down," "run out" and become worthless for agricultural purposes until the humus is restored.

It is very fortunate that public sentiment is being educated and undergoing marked changes in this matter. Most everyone who was raised in the grain growing section of our country can well remember when it was the regular custom to burn nearly all of the stubble land, large stacks of straw, and thousands upon thousands of acres of cornstalks. Now most of us see that such wholesale destruction was sheer wastefulness.

Poultry

Every year at the beginning of winter many poultry keepers are disappointed and puzzled by the failure of apparently well grown pullets to lay according to expectation. They can not understand why early pullets that seemed to be developing nicely and show the usual signs of being near laying should remain at that stage for weeks and sometimes for months.

Where the conditions are as described, the most common cause of deferred laying is an insufficient ration. Underfeeding in the early fall occurs oftenest through the failure of the poultry keeper to increase the food given to pullets on range as much as is necessary to make up for diminution in the supplies secured by foraging.

Underfeeding after the pullets are put into winter quarters is usually due to excess of care to prevent them from becoming too fat to lay.

In either case the remedy is to feed the birds all that they will eat of a substantial ration, furnishing in proper variety the food elements required, taking care at the same time to provide for as much exercise as will keep them in good condition under heavy feeding.

While pullets remain of range the only changes in diet usually necessary as cool weather comes on are to increase the quantities of food given, especially corn and corn products, and if green food on the range is running short to supply what is required to make up the shortage.

It is desirable to have pullets in their winter quarters about a month before they are expected to begin laying. Moving them at that stage does not retard laying, while if they are moved shortly before or after beginning

ing to lay the change may set them back several weeks.

Pullets that will not begin laying before winter sets in may be left in the coops which they occupied while growing as long as the weather permits them to range.

When the pullets are in winter quarters and are dependent upon the feed for all green food and animal food as well as for grain, one of the following rations will supply the variety required. The proportions indicated are parts by weight.

Ration No. 1.

2 parts mash	2 parts scratch feed
2 parts bran	2 parts cracked corn
2 parts middlings	2 parts wheat, oats, or barley, or mixture of the three
1 part beef scrap or fish meal	

Ration No. 2.

2 parts mash	2 parts scratch feed
2 parts cornmeal	2 parts cracked corn
2 parts bran	2 parts wheat, oats, or barley, or mixture of the three
1 part beef scrap or fish meal	

Ration No. 3.

2 parts mash	2 parts scratch feed
2 parts cornmeal	2 parts cracked corn
2 parts bran	2 parts wheat, oats, or barley, or mixture of the three
1 part beef scrap or fish meal	

Ration No. 4.

2 parts mash	2 parts scratch feed
2 parts cornmeal	2 parts cracked corn
2 parts bran	2 parts wheat, oats, or barley, or mixture of the three
1 part beef scrap or fish meal	

Ration No. 5.

2 parts mash	2 parts scratch feed
2 parts cornmeal	2 parts cracked corn
2 parts bran	2 parts wheat, oats, or barley, or mixture of the three
1 part beef scrap or fish meal	

In deciding upon a ration a poultry keeper should be governed largely by the availability and cost of foodstuffs in his locality. The common grains do not differ extremely in composition and food value.

Uses for Salt.

Sprinkle a little salt in the skillet before placing the fish in it to fry and it will not stick to the pan.

Make a little salt bag and rub the griddle with it; pancakes will not stick and there will be no smoke or odor.

Cakes may be prevented from burning by sprinkling a little salt in the bottom of the oven.

When grease or milk has been spilled on a hot stove the odor arising from this may be removed by sprinkling with salt.

Egg stains on silver can be removed by rubbing with a little salt and a damp cloth.

Sheep Notes

Early Spring Lamb.

Early spring lamb, as I understand it, is an animal finished in January and February, says an expert. It must be young and tender and toothsome. I breed early lambs from the meat grades. I prefer Shropshire and Hampshire ewes of good conformation and a Southdown ram. This cross has always produced a lamb of quality for me that commands a top price.

Raising early lambs is a profitable business on any Ontario farm. The lambs are finished and marketed early and the ewes are sheared during April. At that season the fleece is in first-class condition and will command a good price in the wool market. The wool helps to pay for the cost of feed. And the manure is a rich fertilizer that is worth all the straw and roughage used to make it.

I consider it costs me about two cents a day to feed a sheep, because I raise all the rations and roughage on the farm. Under my system of raising sheep, I buy the ewes at the stockyard in July, and the same animals are conditioned for market and sold the following March or April.

Indications point to high prices for early lambs this coming spring, and ewe sheep will cost considerably more than in 1916 and 1917, but I believe the price of hothouse lambs will sell in proportion to the cost of production.

My method of handling sheep should appeal to the busy farmer who has limited pasture land and little waste ground. It gives an incentive to raise sheep because the system has many features that must appeal to the business farmer.

Delicious Dishes of Pop Corn

This year because of the scarcity of sugar we must use less for our Christmas candies. Every pound of maple sugar, honey or molasses that we use instead of white sugar means more for food for the British and French children. If we can, in addition, spread the candy we make over the surface of pop corn kernels, an even greater saving of sugar will result.

Pop corn, salted, buttered, or mixed with molasses, is a wholesome and expensive confection. Pop corn cake may be molded in the form of soldiers, cannon, dolls and other shapes. Fancy boxes or net bags filled with prepared corn will delight the little folk. Combinations of dried fruits and nuts may take the place of candy in filling Christmas boxes.

The following are excellent recipes:

Pop-Corn Balls.

Mix 2½ cups molasses and ½ cup brown sugar, 1 tablespoon butter and 1 tablespoon vinegar and boil until it hardens when dropped into cold water. Have ready 5 quarts of pop corn, free from any imperfectly popped grain. Pour this mixture over the corn; mix well. Dip the hands into cold water and press the corn into balls.

Chocolate Pop-Corn Fudge.

Cook together a pint of sugar, half a pint of milk, 2 squares of bitter chocolate, 1 tablespoon butter, and a saltspoon of salt, until the soft ball stage is reached. Then remove from fire; add a teaspoon of vanilla extract with 1½ cups of coarsely chopped pop corn. Stir until the mixture is creamy but still soft; pour into greased pan, and when it hardens sufficiently, mark into squares.

Maple Pop-Corn Squares.

Boil together 2 lbs. brown sugar or maple sugar, 1 pint milk, and ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar. When the syrup makes a soft ball in cold water, add 2 tablespoons butter; stir it gently and remove from the stove; add a teaspoon vanilla; set the pan in a vessel of cold water and beat until it begins to cool. Then pour into greased, straight-sided pans, and strewn thick with pop corn, while still soft cut into squares, but cut again in the same

lines when cold. Wrap the pieces in waxed paper.

Pop Corn Cake.

One quart popped corn, 1 cup sugar, ½ cup corn syrup, ¼ cup water, 2 tablespoons molasses, 1 tablespoon butter, 1 teaspoon salt. Pick over the popped corn, discarding all hard kernels, and finely chop the corn, or put through meat grinder, using a coarse knife. Put sugar, corn syrup and water in saucepan, stir until it boils, and cook to 270 degrees F., or until candy cracks when tried in cold water; add molasses and butter, and cook to 290 degrees F., or until it is very hard when tried in cold water. Add corn, stir until well mixed, return to fire a moment to loosen it, then pour on buttered slab or tray and roll with rolling-pin as thin as possible. Cut in squares or break in small pieces. Molasses may be omitted.

Maple Corn Fruit Cookies.

Mix 1 cup each of fine-ground pop corn, sugar, and fine-cut figs or other dried fruit with ½ cup each of shortening and milk and a beaten egg. Gradually add 1 cup each of wheat flour and cornmeal, into which 1 teaspoon salt, 1½ teaspoons nutmeg and 4 teaspoons baking powder have been sifted. Roll 1-3 inch thick; cut out and bake in a moderate oven.

Fruit Nut Caramels.

1 cup figs, 1 cup dates, 2 cups walnuts. Wash and stone the dates, wash figs and remove stems, and put with the nuts through food chopper. Mix together thoroughly and press firmly ¾ inch thick into a small buttered pan. Cut in squares, or shape in small balls and roll in icing sugar.

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ness farmer. The net profit is great on the capital invested, and the work of caring for the sheep comes after the outside labor is over and the sheep are sold before the next year's work begins. The price of lamb and mutton is high, and will remain above the old figures for a long time, I am sure. The public is getting to prefer lamb to mutton, and it is up to us farmers to encourage their appetite and supply the demand.

The Dairy

"It has been clearly demonstrated that the good dairy cow is a more economical producer than any other farm animal," says Prof. E. S. Archibald, Dominion Animal Husbandman. "Not only does she actually yield more product from a given amount of feed, but she does that at the least cost and the greatest profit."

Notwithstanding these facts, the production of milk and fat from the average cow is exceedingly low, being approximately 3,800 pounds of milk and 130 pounds of fat per annum, which in value is less than the total cost of production. Nevertheless, it has been clearly demonstrated that by better feeding and management this average may be easily increased from 30 to 50 per cent, with an increased cost of feed and labor of only 10 to 20 per cent; the margin would be largely profit. Such an increase is not only a financial necessity but the patriotic duty of every dairy farmer.

Do not allow dirt to accumulate in the manger or under the water-box. It soon becomes foul and causes the animal to lose its appetite.

GOOD HEALTH QUESTION BOX

By John B. Huber, M.A., M.D.

Dr. Huber will answer all signed letters pertaining to Health. If your question is of general interest it will be answered through these columns; if not, it will be answered personally if stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed. Dr. Huber will not prescribe for individual cases or make diagnosis. Address: Dr. John B. Huber, care of Wilson Publishing Co., 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto.

Consumption—Death's direct door to most hard students, divines, philosophers, physicians, deep lovers, zealots in religion.—Old Saying.

FROM THE SECOND TO THE THIRD YEAR.

Three square meals and a little extra for baby, as follows:

Breakfast: 7 to 8 o'clock. Oatmeal, hominy, cracked wheat (each cooked 4 hours the day before they are used) served with milk and sugar or butter and sugar. A soft boiled egg, hashed chicken. Stale bread and butter. Bran biscuit and butter. A drink of milk.

At 10 a.m. the juice of one orange may be given.

Dinner: 12 o'clock. Strained soups and broths, rare beefsteak, rare roast beef, poultry, fish. Baked potato, peas string beans, squash, mashed cauliflower, mashed peas, strained stewed tomatoes, stewed carrots, spinach, asparagus tips. Bread and butter. For dessert: Plain rice or plain bread pudding, stewed prunes, baked or stewed apple, junket, custard or cornstarch. Supper: 5.30 to 6 o'clock. Farina, cream of wheat, wheatena (each cooked two hours) from 1 to 3 tablespoonsful, served with milk and sugar or butter and sugar or butter and salt. A drink of milk. Stale bread and butter. Twice a week, custard, cornstarch or junket may be given. Occasionally malted milk or weak cocoa.

With three meals a child has a better appetite, much better digestion and thrives far better in consequence, than those children whose stomachs are constantly working overtime. Yet some especially delicate children cannot do without a luncheon at 3 or 3.30; then a glass of milk and a biscuit or a cup of broth are right. Or a child may at this time relish instead a scraped raw apple or a pear; this is particularly judicious for constipated children. Children recovering from serious illness, will require, according to the doctor's directions, more frequent feeding.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

M. W. S.

If you will send me a stamped and

How To Wrap Xmas Boxes.

Christmas packages are getting more attention this year than they did last. Since gifts are to be more practical and not of the decorative type the outside of the package must be decorative. For the last two or three years people have used for wrapping tissue paper of various colors, generally white; have tied a package with red, green or holly ribbon, and have thought they had solved the problem. This year gives must consider the individuality of every person to whom a gift is sent.

Again paper is scarce and every scrap to be found about the home should be utilized. Almost every household has stored away in the attic or storeroom rolls or parts of rolls of wall paper. These pieces can be used for wrapping the Christmas packages to good advantage.

For the round flat package containing some soft fabric, yellow could be used tied with black ribbon, or if necessary one could purchase raffia in various colors for a small amount, much less than the cost of ribbon, and when tying the bow a small bunch of flowers, perhaps the best ones of a spray which has been used on a hat, could be slipped in the knot. The paper may be a little hard to handle. If it is cut in shaped pieces use paste to keep it in place.

A pretty bag for a young woman would look well wrapped in paper of a Dresden design tied with light blue or green ribbon. For a man a plain brown paper tied with red or green raffia is very sensible, since a man has no use for ruffles or furbelows of any description. Bright green or yellow beads are fastened on the ends of the raffia. Most men like red and blue, and it would be a good idea to add a touch of color to the strings where it harmonizes with the wrapping. With green or red sealing wax the package is complete for the male friend or relative.

Sealing wax can be made decorative in many ways. Green or red would be the best for Christmas, and if one has nothing else to seal it with use one of the new coins, or a thimble, but much better would be a monogram. Pendant bows headed are especially suitable for children.

For the package for little folk the shape should be disguised and it should be wrapped securely. Oftentimes their little eyes light upon things which mothers think are safely hidden, and if the package is not safely wrapped the surprise is spoiled for Christmas morning. Little folk are very wise and can often tell by the shape of a package what it contains. Covered with soft green or gray tissue paper and tied with bright green or red ribbon or raffia, with two little bells tied to the bow, an especially attractive package may be arranged for the children.

Often small Santa Claus tied on the boxes for little folk make a pleasing impression, even though the children are curious to get to the inside. With a round package wrap the crepe paper about it loosely, bring the paper to the top to form a rosette and tie with ribbon and with a spray of flowers or holly in the centre.

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MINNIE WIMBLE'S GREAT-AUNT

"If it had merely come to my ears as gossip," said Mrs. Odlin, with dignity, "I should have paid no attention. I have always thought well of Minnie Wimble. But I cannot reject the testimony of my own eyes."

"Of course not, Lucretia," assented Mrs. Bessey, somewhat tartly, "but there's such a thing as seeing straight and understanding crooked."

"That has scarcely a friendly sound, Susan," rejoined Mrs. Odlin, stiffening. "All I can say is, I possess a fair intelligence and excellent eyesight, and Minnie Wimble's land adjoins mine, and I see what I see. If I had a great-aunt eighty-five years old visiting me, I should fulfill my duty to the aged as I understand it. I don't say that Minnie Wimble doesn't understand hers differently, but—Well! To see that poor, frail, silver-haired, tiny, old lady with a limp actually doing Minnie's washing and spreading it out to dry! I was observing oracles through my opera glass and she came directly in line, so I saw the whole thing."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Bessey. Mrs. Odlin flushed, and rose to leave. "If you persistently misinterpret my remarks, Susan, I'm sorry," she observed, "but I think I'd better go. I have a call to make on Mrs. Teuby and a few of the neighbors."

"And I rather think that I have a call to make on Minnie Wimble," murmured Mrs. Bessey, looking after her departing guest with a peculiar expression. "It'll probably be a pleasure, and I'm quite sure it's a duty."

It was the brisk, little, old great-aunt herself who limped to open the door. Mrs. Wimble was out, but Mrs. Bessey accepted a cordial invitation to come in, and the old lady was soon chatting delightedly of the pleasures of her visit.

"All my great-nieces are good to me," she said proudly, "but Minnie's the most understanding. The others, bless them! want to keep me wrapped in cotton wool so I won't break, but Minnie lets me help her do things. You wouldn't believe, now, the good time we've been having together with Grandmother Landon's laces. They needed looking over, and Minnie had put it off till I came, because she remembered I was dainty-fingered handling such things, and she'd a notion there was one or two might be put in shape to use, now fuchsia and caper come in again. Grandmother Landon's wrought collars were famous, and there's a shaped net shoulder scarf with scallops and a basket-of-grapes pattern—well, you'll see it soon, for Minnie's going to wear it guest night at the club; but you be sure, deary, to ask her to let you look at the work close to. It's wonderful!"

"The scarf was yellow as could be when we took it out of the trunk, and a stitch gone here and there, and dreadfully tender; Minnie said she was afraid to touch it. She let me wash it and bleach it all myself, and deary, it's come out beautiful! Minnie's as pleased as Punch, and so am I. And somehow, just looking over the old trunk together got us telling stories and remembering things, and talking family talk, so it's most seemed like going back to when Sister Maria was with me, and we used to talk by the hour, sewing together for the children. Well, well! Maria's been dead thirty years now, and I'm a very old woman, and Minnie's still a young one; but she's understanding, my dear; she's understanding!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Bessey, softly, "she is." Soon she said good-by with a friendly smile on her lips, but something rather like the light of battle in her eyes. "I really must go," she explained. "You see, I have other calls to make—on Mrs. Teuby and a few of the neighbors."

To herself she murmured as she reached the gate, "Lucretia Odlin's trail needs following up, and for once it's going to be followed, and followed quick."

Washing Woollen Garments.

The secret of success in washing all woollens—woven undergarments, flannel petticoats, and cashmere capes and dresses—is not to pour water upon the dry material, and not to rub soap upon them. Plunge the garments into a tub of hot water in which soap has been dissolved. The water should not be hotter than the hands can bear comfortably.

A board should not be used for flannels, but they should be rubbed and squeezed gently between the hands until all soil is removed. Have ready another tub of weak suds a little hotter than the first, and drop them into it, rinsing thoroughly. The water as tightly as possible from the last water, pull and snap into shape, and pin firmly to the line, pulling them gently until all wrinkles are removed.

To make them smooth, with the appearance of a new article, take before quite dry and press with a moderately hot iron until they are completely dry.

A Clean Giveaway.

Teacher (at roll-call)—Why is Bobbie Brown absent?

Tommy Telltale—He's playing truant, sir.

Teacher—How do you know that?

Tommy—Saw him this morning, sir.

Teacher—Yes, but how do you know that he was sent to school?

Tommy—His face was clean, sir.

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