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The

# Farmer's Advocate

## and Home Magazine.

"PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED"

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### EDITORIAL.

#### Revive Interest in Arbor Day.

Arbor Day, the first Friday in May, a red-letter day on the school child's calendar, is approaching, and many a pupil is doubtless counting the days until the half-holiday. Unfortunately, the keeping of Arbor Day is, in many cases, a mere perfunctory observance. Inertia of trustees, indifference of parents, and resulting lack of enthusiasm in teachers is naturally reflected in the attitude of the children, who meet with but half-hearted response the teacher's appeal for effort that previous experience has proven unproductive of permanent results. An annual cleaning up of play-grounds which become littered again, planting of some flower beds on which little bloom ever appears, and setting out an occasional tree whose existence is perpetually jeopardized by boys and other natural enemies, or the piling of some fuel into the woodshed, is about the usual round of the day. Little permanent improvement is attempted for lack of facilities.

A general awakening is necessary to an appreciation of the need of Arbor Day, especially on the part of ratepayers, without whose co-operation little can, and less is likely to be accomplished. The importance of having uplifting influences surrounding our children during the formative period of character growth, should require no demonstration, and yet such is the public indifference on this vital question, that almost any other claim is considered first. Lately an instance was recounted to us of a couple of fine old shade trees, the only ones in the play-ground, being cut down, without so much as a word to pupils or teacher, because a neighbor had complained that they injured his apple trees, although shade trees of his own on the other side of the orchard were left standing. The resentment of the pupils at this inconsiderate act of vandalism, we submit, was justifiable. Think of it, the influence of those trees upon the characters of several generations of children coolly sacrificed for a few barrels of apples!

In cities the value of æsthetic school surroundings and of school gardening by the pupils is being realized, caretakers and gardeners are employed, and nature-study specialists engaged on the teaching staff. In the rural districts such things are not so easy, although the Education Department in the Province of Ontario has sought to encourage school gardens by providing in its regulations for an initial grant, not exceeding \$100, to any rural school board which provides a school garden, comprising at least an acre of land besides the regular school-ground area, with the necessary equipment and accommodation, and promising a subsequent annual grant of \$10, provided the appropriation made by the legislature will warrant such payment. Several such gardens will warrant such payment. Several such gardens have been established in Carleton Co., Ont., and have received the grant of \$100 the first, and \$10 each subsequent year. In Nova Scotia, we understand, there are upwards of seventy rural school gardens, and in Prince Edward Island some work has been carried on under the supervision of the Macdonald nature-study instructor. But for many rural sections we fear that consolidation after the Macdonald system will be necessary before gardening can be suc-

cessfully prosecuted. Culture of fruits and vegetables would certainly be most desirable in a country school, but summer vacation, ravages of poultry and depredations of stock, would be likely to interfere with plans in this direction.

What can and should be done, though, in every case, is to level the school-yard, filling up unsightly swamps, and thus giving the children a chance to do something to ornament their play-ground. This work, though, would probably better be left until autumn, so as to permit seeding to grass without delay. Early May, however, is a good time for tree planting. Some assistance should be afforded in choosing and transplanting. Help the boys to get trees large enough to make a little showing and give promise of reasonably early benefit. It is asking rather too much to expect the pupils to plant merely for the good of the next generation. Having planted the trees, encourage the children to care for them, keeping the ground cultivated or mulched. Too often they are stuck in a hole in the sod, and nature left to do the rest.

Perhaps, also, there are stumps, rocks, or scrubby trees in the yard, which a team of horses is needed to remove. In such cases let the trustees hire a man, or arrange for some ratepayer to take his team for a few hours and assist in the clearing up. Or, perhaps, some of the older boys could be trusted with a steady team. Country boys like to handle horses, and work with twice the will where horse power is being used. Let them feel you are anxious to see them improve the school-grounds, and they will do their part, while with such a starter there will be no lack of co-operation by the girls.

Besides trees, every play-ground should have a good carpet of grass. If there are any bare spots they should be seeded in early spring, or even yet in May, with a good seeding of grass and white clover, say in the proportion of one pound Kentucky blue grass, one pound Canadian blue grass and one pound clover, the seed, if sown late, to be raked into a pulverized seed-bed. While ordinarily children are prone to trample up an inviting piece of mud, it is by no means impossible to enlist their interest sufficiently, particularly if they feel a proprietary interest in the cause, to permit the seeds to make a start, and clothe the bare spots with grass, instead of weeds. A school-ground should and may be a miniature park, attractive at all seasons.

The school is the nursery of the nation. The example set, the ideals presented will influence the careers of the future citizens, and it is just as important that we train them to live well and make attractive homes, as to teach them English and arithmetic. We spend money to give children pleasures and provide them with good clothes and comfortable homes. Why not a little to adorn the school which is their home a large part of their youthful days?

We quite sympathize with the farmer whose planting and seeding is pressing, and who is tempted to keep his boys at home to work every spare moment, but would like to ask each farmer individually what can represent a better investment than a moderate amount of expense and time, especially the children's time, spent in school-ground improvement? Do not, then, keep the boys at home on May 5th, but rather talk up this matter to trustees, teachers and pupils. If every reader of the "Farmer's Advocate" would try to set on foot in his section a movement for whole-hearted Arbor Day observance, what a transformation would be effected in the school-grounds of this country, and, ultimately, also in the homes!

#### Shall we Grow More Roots?

The question has been asked through our columns by several enquirers recently. What crop can we grow as a substitute for roots? The reasons for this enquiry are that roots require a good deal of labor in their cultivation and handling, and help is scarce and dear. There has been, we regret to notice, a growing tendency in the last few years, in many districts, to reduce the area of root culture, and in some sections to drop it out of the programme of farm operations. This is especially noticeable in those sections and on the part of those farmers who have adopted the growing and storing of ensilage corn. Silage is undoubtedly the best available substitute for roots, if the latter must be abandoned, as it furnishes an abundant supply of succulent food for stock in the winter months; but we are convinced it is a grave mistake to depend upon corn to the exclusion of roots in the feeding of young animals, and we are by no means persuaded that corn will take the place of turnips and mangels in the fattening of beef cattle or in the production of milk in the case of dairy cows, while for the healthy growth of sheep and hogs there is no question but that roots are eminently preferable to silage. There is good ground for the belief that the signal success of British breeders of pure-bred stock, in attaining and holding the pre-eminent place freely accorded them as leaders in the improvement of the various classes of live stock, is very largely due to the free use of roots in the feeding ration, and if Canada holds the second place in the production of high-class stock, as we believe she does, it is in no small degree due to the same system of feeding.

Where corn is cheaply and plentifully grown, and is convenient for feeding purposes, the tendency is to feed it exclusively or nearly so, with the inevitable result that an excess of fat is produced, lowering the value of the meat product, impairing the procreative powers, and leading to uncertainty of reproduction, and in many cases to sterility or barrenness. The highest type of animals and the best quality of meat is produced where roots form a considerable proportion of the feeding ration, and Canadian breeders will certainly lose ground in the race for supremacy in live-stock production if, for any reason, they abandon the cultivation of the juicy, succulent turnip and mangel, which have contributed so largely to the fame of the motherland and our own in this respect.

Turnips and straw constitute the principal, and in many cases the entire winter fare of the beef breeds of cattle in Scotland. Turnips are the mainstay of sheep-raising in England, and the feeding of sheep on the land is the most profitable system of maintaining its fertility. With good management, the root crop is not unduly expensive to raise, while the yield may figure out at a thousand bushels per acre under judicious cultivation, which, at the low valuation of five cents a bushel, makes about as profitable a return for the labor and use of the land as any other crop, besides leaving the soil in ideal condition for the succeeding crop.

The preparation for, and sowing of the seed for roots, comes in after the spring grain seeding; the singling and cultivation may generally be done before harvest or in the morning hours when the dew prevents working at haymaking; the storing of the crop comes at a time when other work is not pressing, and, with a cellar full of such feed the farmer feels safe in case any of the fodder crops have proved deficient, and doubly so when all have yielded plentifully. The