

Culture of the Strawberry.

One of the most vexatious things that meets the amateur cultivator at the outset, is the vast amount of opinions, often widely at variance, recommended for the culture of this fruit. A few years ago the great point consisted in planting a certain number of both staminate and pistillate varieties in the same patch; they would then pollinize, and each produce a perfect crop. In these days the hermaphrodites were considered of small account, and, according to some authorities, would not produce half a crop as compared with pistillates; but the Wilson, with its annual crop of two to four hundred bushels per acre, put a quietus on this doctrine.

Then again as to mulching—how many theories have we had? Tan-bark was for time the one thing needful; then straw was the great pabulum,—indeed it was nothing but strawberries in another form, some asserting that the berry derived its name from the astonishing effects of an accidental mulching at some time during the early stages of its culture. Sawdust and new-mown hay also had their advocates.—With regard to the amount and kind of terra-culture necessary there is still much diversity of practice as well as opinion; and after a trial of several I am satisfied that for a small patch the following is perhaps best. First prepare the land perfectly, that is, have it fine, sufficiently rich—there need be no fear of having it too rich—and clear of weeds and their seeds as much as possible; this should be done early in spring. Some growers claim that the fall is the best time for setting; it may be in some localities, but such is not my experience, as when set in the fall they are very liable to winter-kill. Stretch a line and set with a dibble, spreading the roots as much as possible; set them a foot apart in the rows, and the rows two feet apart. I am fully convinced that the best and easiest way to produce cheap berries is by adopting the row system instead of hills, although you can perhaps raise larger berries in hills; still the Wilson will bear large crops where the plants are so close that not a particle of ground can be seen. If the ground has been prepared it will require but one or two hoeings to keep clean until the runners begin to spread rapidly (towards the last of June) after which no more labor is required during the season, except an occasional going over and pulling what weeds make their appearance. If set early they will bear sufficiently the first season to pay all expenses. Some advocate covering during the winter; I never cover mine, and they are never injured by the frost. If covered, something, as a few pieces of rails, should be laid among them to raise the covering,—which may be of straw, cornstalks, or any coarse herbage—an inch or two to prevent smothering. In the Spring spade up a foot wide and leave two feet; this makes a place to walk in to pick the berries, and furnishes air to the plants; the next year spade up another foot, thus renewing the bed every three years. After each spading rake the bed all over with the steel-toothed garden rake, removing all dead vines, &c., and if any weeds appear during the season they should be pulled or cut off just as the strawberry vines. Where grown on this system the ground is so shaded by the vines that they will stand dry weather much better than in hills.—One great advantage is saving of labor; another, that the fruit is always clean, even after the hardest showers, and how much easier than to be continually cutting runners, hoeing and hand-weeding among the hills.

Of all varieties the Wilson is perhaps the best for all localities and soils, yielding well in any locality; a little too tart, perhaps, but, like the Lawton blackberry, this is removed if allowed to thoroughly ripen.—*Germantown Telegraph.*

Successful Experiment.

It has been remarked that agricultural experimentalists, while they often benefit their neighborhoods, and sometimes a much wider circle, rarely reap themselves the reward of their labors and their trials. The truth is, that such experiments are usually costly, and always so if the experimenter be an enthusiast, with convictions running ahead of results. Again, the experiments occupy a long time, necessarily running through a number of years, involving with a failure, loss of time, as well as loss of means. Instances of this will occur to many in connection with the attempt to raise silk in this country. We have no allusion to the multicaulis fever, which was a mere speculation, but the silk-growing proper. The earlier attempts at raising silk-worms on a small scale were sufficiently successful to lead, in many cases, to very considerable investments in accommodations for worms. The business dragged on through a few years, and finally fell through—a signal failure.

So we remember that in the early period of the cotton culture in this country it was supposed that it might be successfully grown in the mild climate of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. An enterprising agriculturist, with commendable caution, as he supposed, increased his crop by degrees, from year to year. He finally made a crop of thirty acres with great success. Encouraged thus, he purchased largely all necessary machinery in the way of gins, etc., and laid out a crop of seventy acres. This was planted in due time, and flourished through the growing season, but an untimely frost brought utter destruction, and this put an end to cotton culture in Maryland.

Such is the fate of experimentalists generally. But we may note a different result in a case we are familiar with, where the gain was remarkable to the author of it, and the practical value of the example may be very great. The experiment was not a very costly one, and may be easily imitated, and we should hope with good, if not equal success, on a great deal of our very poorest lands.

A farmer who had been educated with notions of high farming, that had been confirmed by years of observation, purchased a farm of about a hundred acres, very poor—indeed, hopelessly so, to ordinary observers. Our friend believed, however, that the use of the right means, and enough of them, would effect his purpose, sooner or later, and as the farm was to be his future residence, and he had money at command, he determined to make the experiment, even if he found it a costly one. We will not detail the various operations to which he resorted, and by which he finally brought his land to a very high degree of productiveness. This was done, not without cost, certainly, though the outlay was amply repaid in the end. But we confine our remarks to the most unpromising part of the land, according to our common ideas of fertility. This was a field of blowing sand, so poor that the rye sown on it did not produce the seed the year that the improvement was begun.

Its poverty was still further illustrated the following year by a growth of common field (black-eyed) peas not exceeding six inches in height. This crop of peas was designed to be the basis of improvement, but we should expect little result from the small quantity of vegetable matter thus furnished. Nevertheless, with it was applied fifty bushels of fresh lime. After this twenty bushels of coarse ground bones were put on, and a dressing of three hundred pounds of Peruvian guano, to produce a crop of wheat. It was sown at the same time with clover and grass seeds, which, after standing two years, was followed by corn. After this another crop of peas, with a moderate dressing of bones and guano, brought forty bushels of wheat to the acre. The land was from that time considered permanently improved, and ever since has brought highly profitable crops. All expenses were fully paid in five years' crops. There are thousands of acres of such land within twenty-five miles of Baltimore.—*Am. Farmer.*

AN UNPRECEDENTED OFFER.—In our last issue, we alluded to the offer made by Mr. King, of Minnesota, to Mr. Sheldon, of N.Y., and refused: \$36,000 for three heifers. On the same day, Mr. Sheldon was offered for five cows, the choice of his herd, an amount equal to the aggregate of sales made at Mr. McMillian's—over \$63,000. Short-Horns have never before in this country or elsewhere had such prices set on them; and we are justified in arguing from such offers an increased demand for this class of stock at largely enhanced price.—*American Home Journal.*

VALUE OF STRAWBERRIES NEAR NEW YORK.—At the Farmers' Club, this city, June 21, a display of strawberries was made by Messrs. Reising & Hexamer, at which remarks by Dr. Hexamer were made as follows, respecting the best varieties to plant for market and family use:—"When I am asked I say, plant Wilson to begin with. We sell more plants of this variety than of all others combined. It grows well everywhere, in any sort of soil, in hills or rows; endures neglect well—though good cultivation pays here as everywhere else. True, the Wilson is very sour, but that is no objection in the eyes of city purchasers, who buy for color and size.—The Triumphe de Gand is with us more profitable; so is the Jucunda—these sorts selling in New York for about three times as high a price as the Wilson. We have engaged our entire crop at 40 cents net. We have been able to do this because the gentleman to whom we sell has found our berries reliable. The big ones are not all at the top. The Triumphe needs more care, and to find out where it succeeds, one must make experiment.—The Jucunda I like less; it is softer, but keeps about as well as Wilson. A good point is, that it continues large to the end of the season.—Early varieties we do not raise except for local market. First in the line of these I class Brooklyn Scarlet. Burr's pine is a little later but more prolific; softer, but grows everywhere. French Seeding is hardy, but has a disagreeable taste. The most prolific early variety is the Downer. Nicanor is first-class, and comes just before the Wilson. The Ida, another very early variety, I do not recommend. Lady of the Lake changes its color, like the Wilson, after being picked a day or so. Barnes' Mammoth is not very good, according to my experience, the present season. Boyden's No. 30 has a long soft neck, which makes it unfit for a market berry, but is superior in most respects to the Agriculturist.—For drying and preserving, there is nothing better than the Lady Finger. This is very late. The Green Prolific is even later, but very soft, and liable to be injured by rain.—Lenning's White is the highest flavored of any, and if it were a little more prolific there would be nothing better for home use. The meanest and poorest of all the sorts is Colfax, which was sent out last year with sound of trumpets. I invested \$20, and would now sell for twenty cents. This shows that it cost something to test the new varieties which are offered from time to time.

WASHING THE BARK OF TREES.—If it has not been done before, no time should now be lost in washing the trunks of all fruit trees with some solution to soften the bark, destroy insects which harbor under its rough surfaces, and thus enable it to perform its office in the circulation of the tree, by admitting the descent of the sap. Where it is scaly, hard and impenetrable, as we often see, especially in old trees, this sap is impeded in its course, and becomes congested, an unhealthy condition of the tree results, and the fruit is knotty and imperfect. Insects also are much more liable to attack both tree and fruit, in an unhealthy condition of the bark, or indeed of any other of its important organisms. On the farm no cheaper and more effective remedy is at hand than a mixture of equal proportions of soft soap and lye. Give one or two applications, according to circumstances, to the body of the tree, as high as one can reach, and to where the branches fork. One pound of potash dissolved in a gallon of water will answer the same purpose. Apply with a whitewash brush, and in hard cases we have often used a hand-scrub. The bark of a tree should be soft and pliable, so as to be easily indented with the finger-nail. Avoid whitewash in all cases, not only as a matter of taste, conveying the idea of white sepulchres and graveyards to an orchard where there should be only the most vigorous life, but also because in our observation it makes the bark hard, when it is wanted to be softened. It should certainly be borne in mind that no tree can bear fine and perfect fruit which will sell well, if it is unhealthy or unthrifty from any cause. Vigorous, healthy life, constant thrift, should be the watchword for fruit trees; and this requires the unremitting care of the fruit grower. The time has gone by when, as in the early settlement of the country and with a virginal soil, vegetation of any kind will take care of itself.

Best bear and sow of any age or breed with five pigs of same breed not over seven months old. 1st premium, \$500; 2nd premium, \$100.—*Western Stock Journal.*

Food Medicines.

Dr. Hall relates the case of a man who was cured of biliousness by going without his supper and drinking freely of lemonade. Every morning, says the doctor, "This patient rose with a wonderful sense of rest, refreshment, and a feeling as though the blood had been literally washed, cleansed, and cooled by the lemonade and the fast." His theory is that food will be used as a remedy for many diseases successfully.—For example, he instances cures of spitting blood by the use of salt; epilepsy and yellow fever, by watermelons; kidney affections, by celery; poison, by olive or sweet oil; erysipelas, by pounded cranberries applied to the parts affected; hydrophobia, by onions, &c. So the thing to do in order to keep in good health, is really to know what to eat, and not what medicines to take."

APPLES FOR HEALTH.

A physician says what we have proved to be true:—"Apples, if eaten at breakfast, with coarse bread and butter, without meat or flesh, remove constipation, correct acidities, and cool off febrile conditions more effectually than the most approved medicines."

FRUIT IN LIVING ROOMS.

The *Good Health* says:—"We should be chary of keeping ripe fruit in our sitting rooms, and especially beware of laying it about a sick chamber for any length of time. That complaint which some people make about a faint sensation in the presence of fruit is not fanciful; they may be really affected by it."

Carter's Ditching Machine.

This Machine will be exhibited and operated with at Ailsa Craig Fair, on the 13th and 14th of this month. At London, Western Fair, on the 27th, 28th and 29th Sept. At the Provincial Exhibition, Toronto, from the 3rd to the 7th Oct. And at many of the other County Fairs in this section of the country this fall. We would advise all to see it who are interested in underdraining.

Agricultural Exhibitions, 1870.

- Ontario Provincial Exhibition will be held in Toronto, October 3rd to 7th.
- New Brunswick, at Fredericton, October 4th to 7th.
- Western Fair at London, September 27th to 29th.
- West Middlesex, at Strathroy, September 24th.
- New York State, at Utica, September 27th to 30th.
- Wentworth and Hamilton, 12th and 13th October.
- Montreal, 13th to 15th September.
- Ailsa Craig, North Middlesex, 13th and 14th September.
- Ingersoll, Oxford, 22nd and 23rd September.

FEED FRUIT TREES.—When fruit trees begin to show signs of lessened production of good as well as large quantities of fruit, it is certain that they have nearly exhausted those qualities of the soil on which the tree depended for its healthful vigor. The *Health and Home* recommends, in such cases, that the fruit trees should be fed with lime, chip dirt, wood ashes, gypsum, bones, fishes, and anything that will renovate an exhausted soil. Fruit trees cannot produce fruit out of nothing.