

I have filled the following a number of times, but it is decidedly unsafe:

Potassii permanganatis 3 ss.,
Glycerini,
Aquæ destillatæ aa. f 3 iii.

Not long ago I saw the following:

Morphine hydrochloratis gr. ii,
Ammonii chloridi 3 ii,
Tincturæ aconiti Mxx,
Aquæ camphoræ f 3 ii.

The camphor water should be replaced by some other vehicle, otherwise there will be a deposit formed.

Finally, "as directed" is a perfunctory direction often added to prescriptions. As the memory of the nurse or patient is likely to be weak, errors may be easily made under such lax directions.

There is a mistake, this mixture at first solidifies, but after standing for about 24 hours forms an almost colorless liquid. (*Ed. M.P.J.*)

THE VANILLA BEAN IN MEXICO.

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This bean is too well known to require a description at my hands. It is not difficult to grow, neither is it very laborious to cultivate. The district in which it is principally produced in Mexico is in the canton of Papantla, southwest of Tuxpan, about thirty miles back from the Gulf, in that section of country lying between the Nautla and Tuxpan rivers. In the forests, on the low hills of the above-named canton, it grows wild and in such profusion that the odor from it is sometimes sickening. In its wild state, it is considered common property, and gathered by the natives without cost to them, except the labor of picking. A French colony settled along the River Nautla, has gone into the cultivation of the bean pretty extensively, and seems to have improved it.

The soil on which the bean grows is a rich sandy loam or a vegetable mold, not too dry, and shaded—the wild by the forest trees, and the cultivated by the small trees planted for the purpose. The temperature where it grows is a mean of about 85° F. for the year—never very cold and never very hot, and the altitude up to 1,000 feet above sea level.

Planting.—The bean grows on a vine larger than the hop vine, but similar in its growth.

Slips of the vine are replanted, about three in number, at the foot of small trees, in ground prepared by spading or turning over the soil close to the tree; no other cultivation seems to be needed. These trees are planted 8 or 10 feet apart, the vine running or climbing to the top, whence it is conducted by poles from one tree to another, resembling a hop field. The ground between the trees is not disturbed, except immediately about the roots, where it is cultivated twice yearly. The vine does not produce during the first year, and very little the second, but in the third it is supposed to bear a full crop, which is about 10 to 12 ounces of first-class beans, 10 to 16 ounces of second-class beans, and 15 to 20 ounces of third-class beans. This weight is after curling. The life of the plant is two years.

Gathering.—From October 1 to January 1, the beans are picked or harvested, and I am told care must be taken that they are not bruised or packed close in large quantities, as overheating spoils them.

Curling.—Some place the beans in bake ovens heated to about 120° F. for twenty-four hours. After that they are placed in woolen blankets and expose to the sun—that is, the blankets are exposed, the beans being covered by them. Others tell me that the beans must be dried in the shade and never exposed to the sun, because such exposure would damage them by discoloration.

Preparing for market.—After the beans have been treated as above, they are made up in bundles of fifty beans each, and wrapped in tin foil. The best are generally put in tin cylinders covered at both ends and holding one package of fifty beans, or about one pound each, in which condition they are considered fit for market.

Cost and Price.—The people who gather the vanilla are the natives (Indians) of the country, who are paid at the rate of about 50 cents per diem, Mexican money, without food or lodgings. Prices for labor, however, fluctuate, and it is the old question of supply and demand that governs prices.

The vanilla bean in this market is worth at present about \$7 per pound, Mexican money (about \$3.50 American money). This is the average price; the best is much higher, and the poorest much lower. The cultivation of vanilla is considered very remunerative, and is a business easily learned.

Growing of vanilla and preparing it for market are two entirely different occupations, there being as much difference as there is in growing sugar cane and making sugar. There are about three men in the whole Republic of Mexico who seem to understand the correct process of curing the beans, and these men have made fortunes out of the business.