

CHOICE OF SEED.

This subject can hardly be treated satisfactorily at this stage, it will have to be reverted to for a minute when we treat of the care to be given to the plantations, and particularly to those plants intended to produce seed.

In the matter of seed, the grower should deal only with safe and scrupulous traders, should only use seed in which the germinative power has been fully preserved, and, lastly, in order to be certain of this final point, should test the seed.

In order to do this, he can place a certain number of seeds between two sheets of blotting paper, slightly moisten the whole, and place it in a fairly warm part of the house, where the temperature varies but little (near a hearth), and keep the moisture up by adding several drops of lukewarm water from time to time. From the showing of sprouted seeds at the end of six or eight days, sometimes ten days, and taking into account the temperature and the degree of moisture, he will be able to reckon the useful return from the purchased seed.

The seed of the tobacco plant preserves its vitality for a long time (ten years and more), and it is no more difficult to supply good young seed than to use that which has been four or five years in stock. The variety produced by the grower is thus better developed in every way, he can place it to greater advantage on the market, and he can follow the cultivation more closely with a view to making a profit, if he is an observer of the lessons taught by former years. Seed germinates the more quickly the younger it is.

Seed may be sown germinated or dry.

The sowing of dry seed in half-warm forcing beds ought to fit the plant for transplanting in forty to forty-five days. Hence this seedling will seem preferable to that obtained from swollen or germinated seed. Dry seed will better resist the period of intense cold which prevails about the beginning of the setting up of the seed beds, it has very little to fear from frost, and can await the development of heat in the forcing bed in case the fermentation of the layer of manure should not be sufficiently speedy. We advise Canadian growers to devote a more or less important portion of their seed plot to this method of sowing, and we should be glad to know the results which it produces in the country. (It is well understood that half-warm forcing beds, capable of developing an increase of temperature of 70 to 80 degrees in the atmosphere in which young plants are growing, and that notwithstanding what the outside temperature may be, are meant.)

It should be noted in passing that the temperature most favourable for the germination of the seed and the growth in seed plots, is about 80 to 82 degrees, dry seed can stand a temperature of 110 degrees.

The sowing of sprouted or swollen seed has the advantage of forcing the growth of the plant in the forcing bed, and of thus making a very appreciable gain in time.

One should, however, always avoid the exaggerated germination which is practiced in some parts of Canada; on good forcing beds the seed looks like a little white dot, or only swollen, grows very rapidly, and one does not risk hurting too-developed seeds in the course of the unavoidable blows, which it produces at the moment of sowing. Moreover, there is a serious inconvenience in exhausting the feeble resources of the seed before it can be in the soil, which ought to nourish and develop the young plant to which it will give birth.

GERMINATION.

Germination of seed can be easily obtained by inclosing it in a pocket of thick woollen material soaked in tepid water, drained, and kept in a part of the house where the temperature is about 80 degrees and as equable as possible. It is very easy to examine the seed by opening the pocket from time to time. In other cases the seed can be mingled with mould gathered from the hollows of trees and which is then sown with