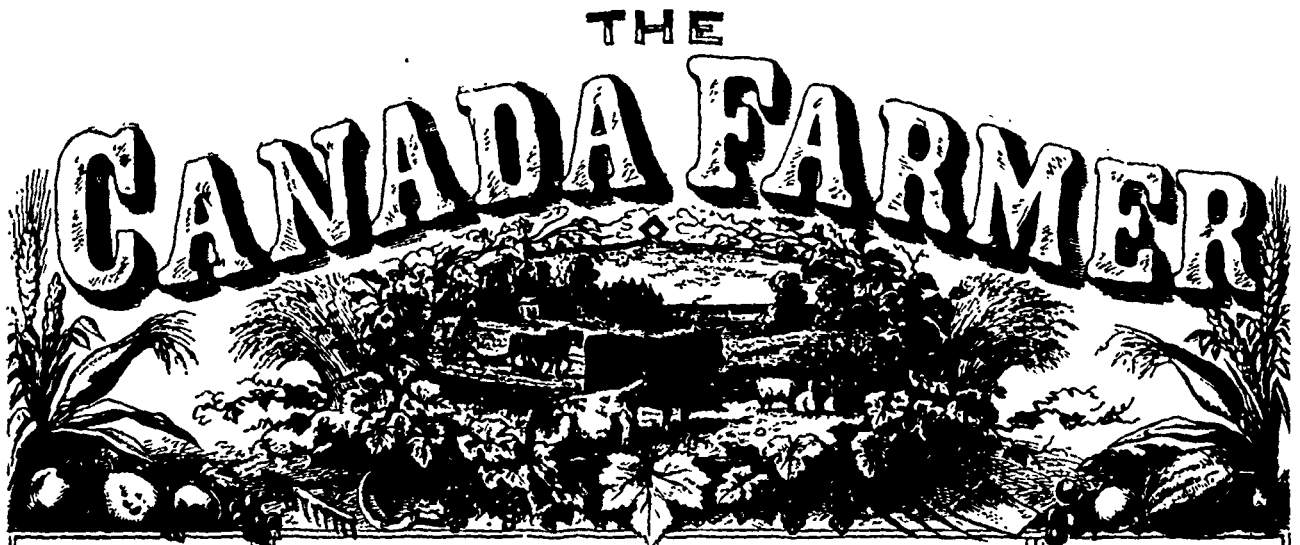


THE CANADA FARMER



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NEW SERIES.

The Field.

Notes on Spring Work.

Owing to the early setting in of hard frost last autumn there has been a smaller breadth of land prepared for spring crop by fall ploughing than is usual, and it will be necessary to begin operations early this year, if the work of preparation for spring sowing is to be well done. It is better to leave land that is in grass or clover untouched, rather than break it up in order to sow with spring grain, unless it can be ploughed the previous fall. If, however, the land must be used for growing grain, and we know it is very common to break up sod for peas or oats, it should be ploughed sufficiently deep to enable the newly turned surface to be worked with a two-horse cultivator, or sharp toothed harrow, to form a tolerably mellow seed bed, previous to sowing. Let the farmer understand that it is not well to try to get in a great breadth of crops in a hasty manner. A few acres well prepared and cultivated will give twice the yield, with only half the labour at harvesting, that could be obtained from a much larger area with indifferent tillage. "What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well," is an old tried maxim that every farmer should remember and be guided by.

PEAS are usually the first crop that can be put into the ground in spring. They do best on sod land that has been broken up the previous fall, and can be cross cultivated in early spring to make a good, yet compact seed bed. This plant derives a large proportion of its food from the atmosphere, rather than the soil, so that it often brings a good crop with careless cultivation, that would prove fatal to other grain. Yet it is a plant that well repays generous treatment, and likes a good mellow seed bed in preference to the hard congenial one it usually obtains. There are many varieties of this plant differing mainly in the size of the seed, length of haulm, and earliness of maturity. As a general rule, that which comes earliest to

maturity will yield the best crop, and we think that too little attention has been paid to this matter hitherto. We imagine that the *Daniel O'Rourke* Pea, a variety of medium length in haulm and size of seed, and one of early maturity, combining great productiveness with richness in quality, a great favourite with market gardeners, would prove a valuable variety for field culture. It is now so extensively grown for market purposes that the seed can be had for about \$1.50 per bushel. It ripens in two months from seed sowing. The quantity of seed required per acre depends a good deal upon the size of the pea; of the small field pea, two bushels per acre are usually sufficient if they are all well covered in, while of the larger kinds from 3 to 4 bushels will be necessary. Peas that are grown thickly will give a large yield of haulm, which is nearly equal in value to clover hay, if cut before it is dead ripe and well saved. We believe that if peas were drilled in like wheat, but at a greater distance apart, say every other drill taken out, they would prove a more productive and sure crop than with the ordinary care they now get. It would be no difficult matter for those who have seed drills to try the experiment and report results. We believe that if early ripening varieties of peas were grown they could be removed from the land in time to grow a crop of late turnips, to be fed off to stock on the ground in November, leaving the soil clean and fit for spring wheat or barley the next season. The best way we know of saving peas from the ravages of the pea bug is to feed them to the fattening hogs early in autumn, before the bug begins its work. Pork can be produced at much less cost at that time than if the fattening process is deferred till cold weather, and will bring as good a price from the packers.

SPRING WHEAT is next in order and is sometimes sown before peas, especially on dry well drained soils, where the land has been prepared by a fallow crop the previous season, and can be easily worked as soon as the frost is out. Wheat requires a compact,

yet deep seed bed, more so perhaps than any other crop grown on the farm. There are so many contingencies on which this crop depends that it is always a matter of some risk to grow it; of late years the Wheat midge has proved very destructive to spring wheat, especially since the varieties of Fall Wheat grown have been either so early in maturity as to become nearly ripe before the midge fly appears, or have a coating of chaff so thick that it effectually prevents the worm from reaching the kernel until it is too dry to be penetrated.

So far, we have not yet discovered any variety of spring wheat that can be properly called "Midge-proof," although there are some that appear to be partially so, and gave fair returns last year, in a few favoured localities. Spring wheat requires a soil that contains lime and clay in considerable proportion, and well repays good tillage. If drilled in, $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of seed per acre is sufficient: broadcast, 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ bushels will be required.

BARLEY.—This crop requires extra care in providing a suitable soil, and good friable seed bed, in order to ensure success. It does best in dry loamy soil that has been well prepared the previous year by a fallow or root crop. It does well after a crop of corn, potatoes, or turnips, to which barn-yard manure has been applied, and well incorporated with the soil. The land must be dry, and free from any liability to retain surface water, which has an injurious effect on barley. The usual way among good farmers of preparing the land, is to throw it up with the plough into ridges of about 15 feet wide the previous fall. As soon as the soil is dry in spring, the land is deeply stirred with a two-horse cultivator, and left a few days to get warm from the sun. It is then well harrowed, the seed sown—either with a drill or broadcast—if the latter, it should be harrowed once, and may then be rolled with a rather light roller, though we do not advise it. Barley is a tender plant, and should not be sown till the soil is warm enough to ensure a quick growth after germination, and