

Progressive Vegetable Culture*

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PROGRESSIVE vegetable growers are looking for new and improved ideas regarding the growing of their products, and any method by which they can realize increased returns from their gardens interests them. The following methods and appliances are being adopted by vegetable men in parts of the United States, and may prove of interest and value to Ontario vegetable growers.

From the greenhouse vegetable growers' standpoint let me say that sterilization of soil is being extensively carried on by practically all progressive growers. In some cases steam boilers are purchased for the sole purpose of treating the soil. Some are using the inverted pan method, others the spike method, and one progressive grower in Grand Rapids (Mr. Yonkers) has made a sterilizing apparatus which amounts to putting a modified skimmer irrigation line under the soil to a depth of four to six inches and forcing live steam through the nozzles. He claims to have had better success from this method than from any other employed. Sterilization will give results. This has been proved by many growers on the other side, and many make an annual practice of treating all soil in the greenhouse.

Some growers make a point of growing only one or two crops and making a specialty of those particular ones and improving as they can. They select their own seed and do their own cross-breeding and aim to supply the market with the best possible varieties of that particular vegetable that can be found. Some make a specialty of cucumbers, others tomatoes, and others lettuce, and during their season the quality of the produce from these specialists can be seen on the markets realizing ten and fifteen per cent. more than that of their competitors. Improved varieties are due largely to selection of seed. These men do not depend on seedsmen for their seed, but at different times go through the growing crops themselves and pick out the best plants and select their specimens from these. The progressive grower knows what his market demands, and the main point on his score card is probably his selection of specimens for seed.

CUCUMBER GROWING

The large greenhouse plants around Toledo are devoted to extensive growing of cucumbers, and they have adopted a device for training their cucumbers on a stake one-half inch by one inch by seven feet in length. It is fitted with a simple nail lock, one nail being driven through, and another, somewhat longer, being

driven through the stake and bent so that it forms a lock with the small nail. The bottom of the stake is either driven into the ground beside the plant or is fitted with a small resting shoe, and stands on top of the ground beside the plant. The tops are let into a piece of ribbon wire which is permanently stretched through the houses. This wire holds the cucumbers solidly in place and excellent results are given.

Skinner irrigation cannot be spoken of too much. Growers in all sections are beginning to use this system on gardens from an acre to forty acres in size with remarkable results. Satisfied growers are everywhere the best answer to any question regarding Skinner irrigation.

It is the custom of some vegetable growers to hold their manure before applying it to the greenhouse. They have told me that they find it worth considerably more to them. Some of them have built concrete manure pits. They pile the manure to a depth of three or four feet in these pits and turn the water on to the manure at intervals to keep down the fire fanging. Some turn the manure at different times. These pits are built with concrete walls about one foot thick and eighteen inches to two feet high. As a rule paving brick is laid in an inch or so of concrete for the bottom. They are higher at the ends than at the centre and are made wide enough to permit hauling manure right into them.

Several growers are now making an annual practice of holding their manure four or five months in this way. They advocate this method especially for the manure that is to go into the greenhouse. The liquid manure is soaked up by the coarse manure and its full benefit is thus gained. Some growers make pits for this manure only and build it entirely of concrete and do not drive in them, simply throwing the manure into a pile in them and watering as they see fit.

A New York firm has a patented celery bleacher which is being tried out by several growers. It consists of a strip of material very similar to some of the common ready roofings, twelve inches wide, and in rolls of one hundred feet in length. This is placed around the celery instead of boards or paper, and is held together by means of I-shaped wire holders, which fit over both sides of the paper. This method is not more than a year or so old and it has been tried with some degree of success by some growers.

STAKING OF TOMATOES

Possibly the staking of tomatoes is being tried out more than any other method by progressive vegetable growers. Fully fifty per cent. of the growers visited last summer were either experi-

menting with it or were beyond that stage and carrying it on as part of their yearly work. There are different methods of staking employed and as yet it is mainly the early varieties that are being staked and in quantities ranging from a few plants to one and a half to two acres.

The commonest method is to drive a stake into the ground beside the plant and tie the plant to it with either twine or raffia. The stakes are of one and one-half inch material, and are made from five to seven feet in length. The plants are set eighteen to twenty inches apart in the rows and three to four feet between the rows. The vines are trimmed to one stem. Growers claim that they get earlier fruit by nearly a week, and that the quality of the fruit is improved. The estimated cost of staking plants is between five and ten cents a plant.

Sowing Vegetable Seeds

Mrs. Dell Galtas, Port Arthur, Ont.

THE time for sowing vegetable seeds out of doors varies greatly. First of all have the ground well prepared and enriched. Before starting to sow, remove all stones and rubbish and pulverize the soil thoroughly. Be neat in all you do.

Onions, peas, spinach, carrots, parsnips and other hardy vegetables may be planted as soon as the ground is fit. Leave cucumber, squash and corn until danger of frost is passed. Sow the seeds in moist or freshly stirred soil. Do not plant too deeply. Sow radish in good rich soil in order to have quick growth. For a succession, sow every two weeks.

Cauliflower seed is very expensive, so when I do not plant in the hot bed but out in the open garden I always put in with it about a cupful of turnip seed, mix them and sow. The turnip plants may be removed before they smother the cauliflower plants. Early Snowball or Dwarf Erfurt are fine for the garden. A great many sow cauliflower and cabbage in the hot bed. It is all right to plant a few seeds so as to have early ones to use, but as a rule the better plan is to sow them directly in rows in the garden as soon as the weather will permit. Mix cabbage seed with turnip seed the same as with cauliflower. This saves time, and I have had good heads just as quickly from plants grown from the start out in the open, although it is hardly considered possible by some. Try both ways.

Cabbage is a gross feeder, and needs lots of rich manure. Most of the best growers apply manure broadcast. In growing early cabbage it is an excellent plan to apply a little dry hen manure around the hills when the plants are half grown. This should be put close to the plants, but scattered over a radius of a foot or more from the plants and then cultivated into the soil. The Early

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