

Soils & Crops

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A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF INDOLENCE.

Lemuel Sprowl still owned a small interest in a farm on the road that branched off the main pike in the direction of the poorhouse. For some years he had been unable to pay in full the interest on the mortgage. Neighbors ventured the assertion that it would be only a question of time when Mr. Sprowl would be compelled to relinquish the place, and become guests of the county.

Happening by on a hot summer day, we left the flivver to cool under a wide-spreading oak at the roadside and went in to have a look at the property. Mr. Sprowl was on the porch, taking his ease in a broken-down, upholstered chair that had seen better days and which, its present occupant found occasion to inform us, had been picked up at an auction some three or four years previous "for the price of a two-bit piece."

"I set this here chair on the porch when I brought it home," he drawled, as he saw us taking note of it, "and somehow I haven't ever got around to carry it into the house. I dunno as it makes much difference. Sort of need something out here every summer. What can I do for you, stranger?"

We made known our desire to look over the farm.

"Nothin' easier," he replied. "There isn't any place around here that offers greater opportunities. It's a little too big for me to keep everything just shipshape. But a younger man like you—"

He eyed me critically. "Yes, you might get along on it pretty well. He led us out to the barn, where we entered the milking stable over a broken plank that held abundant possibilities for broken bones and twisted ankles.

"I keep thinkin' I'll fix that place," he said, "but somehow I don't get to it. I dunno, though, as it's any killin' matter, so long as you know right where to step."

Hearing voices beyond the stable, we inquired if he kept a hired man.

"Not regularly," was the reply. "I dump the manure from the stable out in the yard, and twice a year I get some one to haul it to the fields. Saves a lot of fussin' to do it that way. I'm late, though, with it this summer. That waste've been lyin' there some of a year. It should have been seen to last spring."

"You'll have to straighten that silo, won't you, before you can fill it again?" we questioned, as we noticed the Leaning Tower of Pisa which reared itself in the barn lot next to a feeding shed.

POULTRY.

One hundred baby chicks when hatched will usually weigh between seven and eight pounds. When the chicks have reached an age of two to three weeks they should weigh between one hundred and seventy-five and two hundred pounds. For sake of comparison we will take a calf at birth with a weight of eighty pounds. Should the calf make the same rate of gain as the chick, it would at twelve weeks of age weigh a ton. This will help one to understand why broods of chicks vary so much, and will also assist the feeder to appreciate the opportunity at hand to display his skill, so says Prof. W. R. Graham of the O.A.C. Poultry Dept.

The use of the incubator and brooder has forced the poultry keeper to study the methods of growing chicks. A mother hen and her brood, when allowed to range, can be fed many feeds, and the chicks do well simply because the hen and the chicks balance the ration by catching insects and selecting tender green feed and, it may be, several other things that we have never observed.

There is a great variation in different broods of chicks reared by the artificial method, and many broods have a high mortality and a very unthrifty appearance. The chicks can be reared easily with reasonable care and attention. The use of a little common sense is essential.

One should remember that, given a brooder, a colony house, and say three hundred baby chicks, it is the duty of the operator to keep the chicks comfortable, and that every need of the body must be taken to those chicks. There is no clucking hen to pick up bits of gravel or to catch insects. The feed must be taken to the chick.

At present the Dept. of Poultry Husbandry at the O.A.C. is conducting a series of experiments, the object being to find a simple, inexpensive method of growing to normal chicken. It may take years to get the answer, but each season we add a little to our knowledge.

Celery Culture.

Any good rich garden soil will grow good celery. It is a gross feeder and must have an abundance of fertility to draw upon if tender, well-developed stalks are to be obtained. If the soil becomes dried out even with an abundance of plant food present, succulent stalks are not likely to develop. These two things, plant food and

"I quit usin' silage two or three years back," Mr. Sprowl advised with an air of wisdom. "The fellow who put up that silo was a stock-feder and he put it pretty near in the middle of the lot. Handlin' dairy cows I had to lug the feed clear across to the milkin' stable. I couldn't see any sense in makin' a slave of myself for the sake of a parcel of cows, so I quit fillin' it. Yes, I've been noticin' quite a while that she's gettin' a slant in her. It seems I could never get time to tighten them hoops when they should have been looked after. When it develops should have an open centre, so as to let in the sunshine. For this reason, when a branch is cut off, the cut should be made a half inch or so above the bud, on the outside. Pruning should not be done until the buds are commencing to swell. One may be assured that he is leaving uninjured wood. It is not necessary to wait until the buds near the ground are bursting, because those higher up open first and, if a fairly long stem is left, the lower buds do not break at all. By cutting off the stems fairly low, the lower buds are forced into growth. Experience will soon teach what is the best method of pruning for the particular conditions desired. In pruning, the strongest healthiest stems are left and the weak ones cut off close to the ground or bush or larger limb.

As a safeguard against mildew and black spot it is well to burn all the pruned wood and to spray the bushes with a fairly strong solution of Bordeaux mixture or other suitable fungicide. Instructions for making and applying fungicides as well as insecticides for rose plants are given in Bulletin No. 85 of the Experimental Farms, "Hardy Roses," available at the Publications Branch of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa. This bulletin also names and describes the best varieties to grow.

Pruning for Fine Roses.

The rose grower has it in his power at this season of the year to prepare his plants for a heavy crop of moderate quality or a smaller crop of superior blooms. It must be observed, however, that the amount of pruning that should be done to a rose bush depends somewhat upon the variety of the rose. Roses of modern varieties bloom on wood of the current year's growth. That is to say, the buds that start from the old branches this spring will produce the flowers this year. Rose growers will have observed that the strongest new wood and the finest bloom comes from the buds that are close to the ground. It, therefore, pays to shorten back the wood to within a foot or so of the root. This applies more especially to young plants. Older plants of the strong growing varieties such as J. B. Clark and Frau Karl Druschki, should not be pruned so severely. It is always desirable that the bush when it develops should have an open centre, so as to let in the sunshine. For this reason, when a branch is cut off, the cut should be made a half inch or so above the bud, on the outside. Pruning should not be done until the buds are commencing to swell. One may be assured that he is leaving uninjured wood. It is not necessary to wait until the buds near the ground are bursting, because those higher up open first and, if a fairly long stem is left, the lower buds do not break at all. By cutting off the stems fairly low, the lower buds are forced into growth. Experience will soon teach what is the best method of pruning for the particular conditions desired. In pruning, the strongest healthiest stems are left and the weak ones cut off close to the ground or bush or larger limb.

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Cultivation of Strawberries.

Strawberries require a moist, rich rather light and loamy soil to produce the best results. The land should be in good condition and free from weeds. A heavy application of manure should be worked into the soil at the time of planting, using well rotted manure, at the rate of thirty to forty tons per acre, according to the Dominion Horticulturist, who further advised, if impossible to obtain barnyard manure, the turning under of a crop of clover and the use of a fertilizer composed of 200 to 300 pounds of muriate of potash (or 25 to 45 bushels of wood ashes), 200 to 300 pounds of either ground bone or acid phosphate, and about 75 to 100 pounds of nitrate of soda, to be applied at time of planting. Planting is done preferably on a cloudy day, and the young plants should not be allowed to become dry at any time. After planting the plantation should be covered with a fine-tooth cultivator and this cultivation should be continued at intervals of two weeks through the season, and after each heavy rain. The blossoms should be picked off the first season and the ground kept free from weeds. A few trips through the patch to place the runners properly should also be made. In selecting runners for propagation select good-sized healthy plants.

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RED ROSE TEA "is good tea"

Folks who want the very best use RED ROSE ORANGE PEKOE

Home Education

"The Child's First School is the Family"—Froebel.

Suringtime Gardening—By Sophie Kitchener

"See, what a wonderful garden is here. Planted and trimmed for my Little-Oh-Dea! Posies so gaudy and grass of such brown—Searched ye the country and hunt ye the town. And never ye'll meet with a garden so queer As this one I've made for my Little-Oh-Dea!"

Training that associates itself naturally with the season of the year is particularly apt to make its impression on a child. The child is sensitive to the natural changes in the world about him and there is value in any "lesson" that can be correlated with the lively interest he takes in the weather, the sky, the trees, and the plants.

In the spring, for instance, the child loves to play in the little rivulets that form from the melting snows and the rains. He bridges them; the dashing torrents he dams to turn his little waterwheels; on the quiet navigable ones he floats his paper boats. He is conscious of the special tang he feels in playing in this mud and water. He is unable to know it is the "liveness" of waking nature appealing to him, but he senses the message and responds.

The mother, too, if she be a lover of nature, thrills to the same message brought by other couriers. How much more the child's half-conscious love will mean to him if she realizes that he shares her own appreciation and if she takes care to foster it until it becomes actual knowledge of nature.

One mother of my acquaintance realized the value of such timely training. She purchased for her little daughter, a book that told the story of the bean. It told of its development from an insignificant pebble-like thing into a lovely tall vine with flowers which, in turn, produced the bean that people use for food.

The lima bean was pictured as a baby that grew and grew. The child was interested, so the mother got some lima beans, quite a while before it was time to plant them outdoors, and put them between a roll of good blotting paper, inserted in a