

PREPARING THE SOIL

First Things to Do in Getting the Garden Ready.

FEW TOOLS ARE NECESSARY

Information on Digging, Planting, and Transplanting Which Will Help the Amateur to Get Started Right.

(By S. C. JOHNSTON, Vegetable Specialist, Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

The soil is the workshop in which is found many of the constituents which go to make up plant food. These foods must be so treated that they will be in such a condition that they may be readily taken up by the slender rootlets of the plant so that the plant will thrive and mature.

If possible add some manure to your soil and work it up well before planting time. This manure may be obtained from various sources close to your home; livery stables or farms dealing entirely with manure would be willing to supply it at a reasonable rate. On heavy soils it is particularly recommended that heavy applications be made in order that the soil will be of a much finer condition so that it will retain a large quantity of plant food. Many of the garden soils will be benefited by the application of lime. This may be secured from various sources such as the contractor and builder, lime and cement dealers, and may be in the form of fresh lime or even slaked lime. This lime should be scattered over the surface of the soil after the digging has taken place, and a sufficient amount should be applied to make the surface of the ground fairly white. This should be gently raked into the soil just previous to the planting of the seed.

DIGGING. It is necessary in all gardens that the soil be turned over at one time or another during the early spring in order that it may become dry and fined. We find that many of the troubles of the backyard gardens are caused by digging the soil too early in the spring. One of the easiest ways to tell when the soil is ready for digging is to gather a handful and press the fingers over it. If the soil in the hand sets in a somewhat compact mass the time is not far enough advanced for commencing digging. If, however, the soil falls apart into several small parts we may rest assured that it is perfectly safe to dig.

TOOLS. It is unnecessary for the backyard gardener to purchase many tools for this first garden. Those who have been growing vegetables in their backyard for a number of years gradually add to their supply until after three or four years they have accumulated many special tools which are suited for particular operations in the garden. Complaints are sometimes heard that the expense necessary to commence a backyard garden is very great. Many very good backyard gardens have been made and excellent harvests obtained with very few and comparatively inexpensive tools. A digging fork or spade, a rake, and a hoe are about all the tools essential at the outset, and these are inexpensive.

PLANTING OF SEEDS. When it has been determined that the soil is suitable for digging and the weather is nice and warm, it is necessary that the seeds be planted in the garden. As fine a surface as possible should be secured, so that the little seeds will quickly germinate and grow. To sow the seeds quickly, evenly, and thinly requires considerable practice and care. The row may be made straight by stretching fairly tight a piece of string from one portion of the garden to another and using this as a guide for marking the trenches or drills for placing the seeds in. After the seeds have been dropped in they should at once be covered with soil by gently drawing some of the loose surface soil in over the seeds with a piece of stick or with the hands. This soil should, however, not be heaped over the row but should be placed evenly with the rest of the garden soil and packed down.

THINNING. Backyard gardeners should not attempt to grow immense quantities at first. It is necessary to plant sufficient seed to secure a good crop of plants, the more slender plants being thinned out soon after they are above ground so as to assure reasonable room for a good crop of healthier plants. The thinning should be commenced when the plants are from one to two inches in height and should not be left until the plants have become long and slender, because if they are left one plant simply tries to smother another one out; whereas, if they are thinned to the proper distance they will have room to grow to their required size of maturity.

TRANSPLANTING. The city dweller will find it almost impossible to grow plants of first-class quality of such vegetables as tomatoes, celery, or cabbages unless he has other appliances such as a hot-bed, which enables him to start the seeds very early in the spring and some time before they could have been planted out in the garden, in order that he may secure early crops. It is good practice for him to purchase plants which may be taken to the backyard garden and transplanted or set out in the garden at a required distance and good healthy crops grown from them, and in all cases when purchasing plants only sturdy and vigorous growing plants should be accepted. Tomato plants to give the best results should be eight inches high, and the stalk should be at least as thick as a lead pencil and thicker if possible. If the plants already are in bloom this may be considered a very good feature. The root system of the plants should be large and having fine rootlets. When transplanting individual plants care should be taken to make sure that quite a good deal of soil is left around the root of each plant

AND NOW

Soil Should Be Allowed to Rest Up Before Planting

SOME FIRST CROPS TO PUT IN

Beans Are a Splendid Food Product to Grow This Year—How to Proceed in Several Lines.

(By S. C. JOHNSTON, Vegetable Specialist, Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

Having discussed the methods of preparing the garden soil to receive the seed we now turn to the sowing of the seed itself. There is no need to hurry the sowing of the seed. Better results will be obtained if the amateur gardener will wait until the soil is warm and easily worked. The vegetables discussed are arranged as nearly as possible according to the time they should be planted.

LETTUCE. Lettuce is grown for its leaves, and is our best known salad plant. It is a short-season plant, and is often grown to follow or precede another crop. It is quite hardy and may be planted quite early in the spring, grown to maturity, and followed with a tender crop such as tomatoes, or it may be planted between any plants of the cabbage family. It is a good plan in a small garden to plant only a few feet at one time and follow this with successive plantings made every ten days or two weeks until July 1st. The lettuce seed may be sown in rows comparatively thinly at a depth of a quarter of an inch. The plants should be thinned to stand two inches apart.

If one desires large single heads of lettuce the plants should be thinned to stand from seven to nine inches apart. The thinnings may be transplanted to another part of the garden.

RADISH. The radish plant is grown for its roots, which are eaten raw just as soon as they are large enough to use. It is quite hardy, and may be planted very early in the spring. Radishes are frequently sown with other crops, such as parsnips. They should, however, be pulled out before the parsnips or other crops need the ground. Successive planting is also advised for this crop. Radish seed may be planted in rows, four inches apart or broadcasted, the depth preferred being from a quarter to half an inch only. Radish as a general rule require no thinning, and the soil between the rows should be kept loose with the hoe. A crop of winter radish may be obtained if the seed is sown about the first of August. These should be thinned out to three inches apart.

SPINACH. Spinach is a short season crop which is grown to provide table greens. The plant matures in about six weeks from planting, and seed should be sown very early in the spring, as the summer months. The seeds may be planted in rows or broadcasted, and should be sown at a depth of one half inch. Successive planting may be made if so desired. When the leaves are large enough to use they may be pulled off or the whole plant may be cut from the root.

ONION. The onion is grown for seasoning, pickling, and for eating raw. A large percentage of onions stored for winter use are grown from seed planted in the soil very early in the spring. The soil should be rich, moist and well drained, but fresh manure is not the best to apply. The seeds should be planted at a depth of about one-half inch, and the rows should be from twelve to fourteen inches apart. The seed should be planted very thinly so that there will be no need for extra thinning of the onions. Cultivation should cease when the onion tops are such a size as to prevent easy work. In the fall when the tops are about two-thirds died down the onions should be pulled and laid in windrows so arranged that the bulbs are covered with the tops of the onions. This prevents any sunburn which causes considerable trouble in storage. After they have been kept in this position for five or six days they may be gathered up and placed in a slat box or basket and tied up some way so that the rain will not get at them and the wind will have plenty of chance to circulate around the bulbs. The tops may be removed from the onions at this time if so desired, or they may be left on. Dutch sets may be planted as close together as they will stand in a straight row very early in the season. They should be barely covered with soil, which should be well firmed by tramping on it, and the green onions should be pulled as soon as they are ready for use.

PEAS. Peas may be planted very early in the season, and for the early crop the seed should be sown in a furrow of two inches deep and the seeds placed an inch apart. Some arrangements should be made so that the pea vines will have some support. Limbs of trees or chicken wire may be used for this purpose, as the vines will cling to this for support and will be kept up from the ground. This support should be set preferably at the time of planting. This soil should be drawn up around the vine.

BEANS. Generally speaking, it is not a good practice to add fresh manure to the soil where one expects to grow beans. They prefer a moist, deep loam. The seeds should be planted fairly early in the spring. The rows being at least eighteen inches apart. A furrow two inches deep may be made with the corner of a hoe and the seeds placed from two to three inches apart in the bottom of this furrow. Another way which is sometimes followed in planting beans is to make holes two inches deep twelve inches apart and in each hole three or four seeds be placed. It is always advised not to touch the plant when they are wet.

LOCAL ITEMS

Miss Erma Redmond has returned to her home in Montclair, N.J., after spending several weeks here.

Dr. G. H. R. Hamilton has returned from France where he was in the medical service of the French army. He is now at his old home at Morrisburg.

Mr. Alex Campo, who was in Chicago, visiting his son, was called to New York by the death of his wife. He returned to Athens last week accompanied by his son, Jerry, who is spending a few days here.

Mr. Everett Latimer escaped with a number of bruises when their new McLaughlin car came in contact with a tree on Sunday. The car itself was badly wrecked, and was shipped back to the factory yesterday.

The girls of the Athens High School held a paper chase on Thursday through the village streets, maple groves, meadows, and highways. The distributors of chopped paper were caught on the Delta Road and hares and hounds found rest and coolth beside cones of ice cream at E. C. Tribute's parlors.

Rev. Canon Forneri, of Kingston, preached a very fine sermon in Christ's church Sunday evening on the Christian life—the example of living set forth by Jesus. His words were quietly persuasive of the advantage of right living. Athenians will remember a son of Canon Forneri, who was at one time a member of the Merchants Bank staff here, and who lost his life while fighting in France.

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Notices of future events of any kind and for any purpose, at which an admission fee is charged, collection taken at the door or revenue derived in any other way, are classed as advertising, and will be charged at the regular rates of this newspaper.

OLD NEWSPAPERS

Old newspapers may be obtained at the Reporter Office at 1c a pound. We have some in 25 pound bundles.

DEATH OF MRS. ALEXANDER CAMPO

The death occurred on Easter Sunday in New York City of Mrs. Alexander Campo after a few days illness of heart trouble, in her 80th year. Deceased was born in Coniston, Prince Edward County, her maiden name being Miss Sarah N. Herrington. She married Mr. Alexander Campo sixty years ago, and for about forty years resided in Athens. Twenty years ago she went to New York where she lived until the time of her death.

Besides her husband, she is survived by three sons and five daughters, namely: Richard, of Athens; Jerry, of Chicago; Olive, of New York; Mrs. A. Wiltse, Portland, Maine; Mrs. Chas. Anderson, Mrs. Chas. Watson, Mrs. J. H. Martin, Mrs. Albert Smith, New York.

The funeral took place to Evergreen Cemetery on Wednesday, Apr. 11, service being conducted at the residence. It was attended by all the children of the deceased.

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