

Preparation of the soil

The preparation of the soil for flax growing may be summed up in the perfect execution of the following operations ;

(1) *Ploughing*. — Fall ploughing is preferable, more or less deep, according as the soil is light, medium or heavy.

(2) *Drainage*. — What has already been said for wheat and other cereals may be more emphatically repeated for flax ; even an inferior crop cannot be hoped for if the soil is not drained naturally or artificially.

(3) *Loosening*. — This work is easily done when the soil has borne a hoed crop the year before ; it only requires a deep layer of earth, free of large lumps and weed roots. The *complete eradication of weeds* is particularly insisted upon.

When flax is grown for fibre, it is harvested by hand, and this operation is much longer and more tedious in a field infested by weeds apart of the fact that the yield is considerably decreased.

(4) *Rolling*. — In light soils, rolling will take place after seeding so as to put the seed in close touch with the earth and to harden the soil. It is however not recommended in heavy soils ; if it is done, it should be before seeding and the soil should be harrowed immediately after.

Seeding

In this respect, four important points should be given consideration :

(1) *Selection and preparation of the seed*. — Blue flowered flax will yield the best grade of fibre. Perfectly ripe seed, and free from weed seeds should be sown ; the latter point is of first importance because weedings are almost impossible after the grain has grown up ; hence the advisability of complete cleanings and fannings.

Another question is to ascertain the germinative power of the seed ; for this purpose make an early seeding in a pot and find out the percentage of seeds growing vigorous.

As flax seed is liable to various cryptogamic diseases, it should be treated in formalin before being sown. One ounce of formalin is diluted in 10 quarts of water and this solution is sprayed on the seed spread in a thin layer on a cloth.