

ties, as it prevents too large growth of the lower leaves. Mr. W. W. Albro said. "I have to-day visited a crop of tobacco which was topped two weeks ago. The plants were topped very high—or what would generally be considered too high for seed leaf tobacco—but now the top leaves are nearly as large as any on the plants." John Strauss had topped some hybrid tobacco about ten days before, very high, as he thought at the time, but upon looking at the plants that day he decided that he had topped too low, as all the growth appeared to go into the top leaves. G. A. Goff, Jr., thought, in regard to high and low topping, that very much depends upon the stage of growth which the plants have reached at the time. He is convinced that it is a mistake to allow any tobacco plant, not intended for seed, to produce blossoms, and in his own practice he said he makes it a rule to allow no blossoms to appear. He argued that all growth which a plant is allowed to make above the point where the top is to be broken off is waste of strength to the plant. President John D. Miller said there is no question that all unnecessary growth which the plant makes before the topping is performed, is a waste of plant force. "Early topping," he said, confines the entire strength and growth of the plant to the leaves which make up the crop."

It was thought by several members that it is a common mistake to allow tobacco to stand too long after topping before cutting. It being somewhat difficult to tell when the crop is in the best condition to harvest, inexperienced growers are liable to the mistake of allowing the plants to remain in the field until the leaves become so ripe that the quality of the cured product is impaired. A fine, silky leaf is generally preferred, and this quality is best secured by allowing but from two to three weeks to elapse between topping and cutting the crop.

Several of those present at the meeting reported having experimented this season with wheat plowed down early in June for green manure for tobacco, and thus far results have been wholly satisfactory, giving a good color and growth to the plants. Wheat is considered preferable to rye as a green manure crop, because it is of a warmer nature and decomposes quicker. A case was reported of rye turned down in spring, which had remained in the ground through the greater part of the summer without the straw becoming rotten, and causing, as was thought positive damage to the crop. Commercial fertilizers were generally considered unsatisfactory, and one member reported having bought some dried blood which, on being washed out in water, was found to be composed to a considerable degree of tan-bark. Another fertilizer on being washed out proved to be made up in part of common sand. However, the latter was found to give good results when used on cabbages. G. A. G. JR.

Elmira, N. Y.

Care of Sitting Hens.

EDS. COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—Although rather late in the season to be of practical use for this year, I venture a few hints which some of your readers may find of benefit at some future time. We often read of disappointment by persons who purchase eggs for setting, sometimes to be carried far by express or other transportation, or nearer, where no fault in hatching can be laid to injury in transit. There are several reasons why eggs fail to hatch, such as failing to be properly impregnated, want of care in gathering, and keeping after being gathered, proper attention to hen and eggs during incubation, &c. If one keeps more than one breed he should keep them entirely separate. Strong vigorous cocks should be kept in not less proportion than one to ten hens. The nests

should be shallow so that the hen in going on and off need not disturb the eggs, which should be gathered often.

When the eggs are gathered they should be carefully handled, placed in a suitable dish where they may lie without being piled one on the other, and can be carefully turned daily. They should be kept in a room of even, low temperature, never in a cold or damp cellar. Better keep them out of any cellar, judging from my experience. The eggs ought not to be kept on hand over a week, at most two, before being put under the hen. If eggs of different breeds are put under the same hen it is well to mark them with ink to distinguish the sorts. The number of eggs to put under a hen depends upon the size of the hen, season and weather. In cold weather nine eggs are sufficient for any of the medium breeds, and eleven for the larger. In mild or warm weather the same hens will manage eleven to fifteen. In cold weather the nests should be in a building which can be kept comfortable, and the hen should have food, water, and dust bath, so that she may not be off from the eggs long enough for them to get chilled.

It is well, unless the hen can run out to get her feathers moist, to sprinkle the eggs with lukewarm water after the hen has been sitting a week or ten days, and every time an opportunity occurs thereafter. If an egg gets broken, every trace of it should be removed, even to washing the eggs besmeared, which should be done when the hen is off the nest.

Whenever the hen can be set in the nest where she has laid, it is best to do so. If a new nest is to be made, it is better to take a box six to ten inches deep, and fill it about two thirds full of fresh earth, over which put a layer of fine hay, shaping the nest naturally: put in a few nest eggs, and put the hen on them at night, confining her there till she becomes accustomed to her new quarters, when she may be given her liberty. If inclined to be contented, put the eggs under her at night, and watch her and the nest for results.

To keep hens clear of parasites while sitting, it is well to sprinkle a little flour of sulphur through their feathers and in the nest. It is better to set several hens at the same time, and when they hatch unite the broods, if only a part of the eggs hatch, and the hen can care for more than her own, which will depend upon weather and size of hen.

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About Choosing Breeds.

EDS. COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—There are some breeds that unite both beauty and utility, others are merely ornamental, while still others have little to recommend them beyond the cardinal virtue of usefulness. Most well-kept fowls have a certain amount of comeliness, plumpness, and regularity of plumage. The pure-bred fowls have markings that belong to their breed alone, which greatly serve to establish their purity. When two distinct varieties are crossed, discrepancy creeps in. A judicious cross, sometimes makes a nice bird, but more often the beauty of both sides is entirely lost. An over-sized fowl is not handsome or useful. There are many who breed largely for market purposes, either flesh or eggs. For early chickens, something that unites size with quick maturity should be selected. This useful bird is generally obtained from a crossing of two good breeds, which makes a fowl also good for egg production.

A mistake is often made in the introduction of too much Asiatic blood, which element possesses too much bone, is long in coming to maturity, and has at last, a poor quality of flesh. The Plymouth Rocks are highly esteemed for this purpose, but are at best only indifferent layers. Broilers, as be prof-