

# THE CANADA FARMER



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NEW SERIES.

## The Field.

### Turnip Raising.

The different varieties of common turnips—that is, not including the “Swedes”—may be comprised under two heads—the white and the yellow fleshed, and these bear much the same relationship to each other in their economical value, as does yellow cream to blue skim milk. The white-fleshed are usually the table turnip in England and elsewhere by professed cooks; but the yellow-fleshed are the only table turnips used by the Scottish peasantry who have any knowledge of the subject at all.

In the art of cookery, when a white-fleshed turnip has been boiled until it is soft, it is pronounced “done,” and fit for the tables but it is far otherwise when the north country housewife cooks turnips for the table. Small-sized, yellow fleshed ones are selected, because large-sized ones are often coarse in flesh and poor in juice; and here I would remark, in passing, that this is precisely the case with the sugar-beet—the smaller sized roots are richer in sugar than the larger sized ones. The turnips, when pared, are put into an iron pot to boil with about twice their bulk of water; and this is done at an early hour in the morning; and, be it observed, the turnips are for the family supper, which will not be on the table till 7 in the evening, and by that time the turnips will have boiled or simmered some 10 or 12 hours. The natural consequence of this long boiling is to reduce the broth or liquor to less than half its original quantity; but the boiling has to be so managed that whilst the turnips simmer all day long, they neither cool below the boiling point, nor boil so hard as to evaporate all the syrup—for it comes to syrup at last—and so troublesome is the process of turnip boiling in this way, that it is only by way of a treat that the thing is indulged in at all, and children speak of turnip porridge as worthy of being remembered to the end of their lives.

Now, it must be very evident to hundreds as well as to me that the true character and usefulness of the common yellow fleshed turnip are not generally known, and when it is explained that plain boiling for a few hours converts the natural juices of the turnip into a syrup or sweet wort of the highest importance as cattle food, and by no means to be lightly spoken of as food for man, the subject is worth following out a little more than it has been in this direction.

In the first place, the object is not to try for a crop of large turnips, but to secure the greatest weight of turnips of small or moderate size; and this will be best secured where the rows are on the level ground, and not on raised ridges, for if we suppose that the ridges are 30 inches from centre to centre, and that flat drills are only 20 inches apart, there will be one-third more plants on the same land. In cultivating the turnip for seed, these are the usual distances apart of the flat drills, and in the ordinary cultivation of farmers' turnips, the raised drills 30 inches apart may be taken as the rule. In order to show that the flat drill system is no upstart, I may mention that my father grew his turnips for seed on the flat drill system about the year of the three sevens (1777), which will very shortly be one hundred years ago, and for many years in my time a very spirited trade was carried on in Aberdeenshire in the turnip seed line, so that I may be allowed to speak with some authority on the points, for I may say that the very flesh upon my bones, ay, and the bones themselves, have been built up by the profits arising out of transplanted turnips about the size of a man's clenched hand, and any one acquainted with this sized turnip is usually firm, without being tough, and not soft in the centre, as most large turnips are. The Highlander has long ago made bad whiskey out of turnips and potatoes, and would do so still, no doubt, were it not for the turnip taste which the liquor retains when made from turnips.

The simmering process above narrated must not be understood as mere boiling or cooking of turnips, it is syruing the juices of the turnip, and when so converted into wort or syrup, meal, bran, &c., can be added to it as food for cattle, just as linseed jelly as added to dry provender. It is pretty clear that in the great field, of all the true grasses the sugar is the pioneer of the starch, and the starch is in turn the reservoir or granary of the sugar, for the sweet leaves and stems of the corn plants tell first of the sweetening or malting of the grain, when the radicle and plumula parted company, and the one took downwards to the earth and the other upwards to the air, but at the end of the race they balance the account, and the transient sugar gives place to the indestructible starch, packed neatly in the form of grain and grass seeds, for the great purpose of feeding the world with bread corn. When grass is in the saccharine form we find the neat cattle and other grass-eating animals feeding on the green herbage, and this may be reckoned their best food, and whilst the

grass is soft, green and sugary to the taste, these animals will show by their fine condition that they are really their perfect state, for with a quantity of healthy grass they want for nothing. — *London Agricultural Gazette.*

### Cultivation of Basket Willow.

The soil for basket willows should be of a deep sandy loam, well drained, and thoroughly prepared; and the situation ought to be low, level and naturally moist; and if there is a command of water for irrigation, so much the better. It will succeed, however, on a somewhat dry soil, in which the shoots will not only be small, but larger, tougher, and more compact and durable than when grown in a soil that is rich and moist. In dry soils, also, the growth of the plant is much slower than when it has been impelled by water. The best situation, when the object is free and rapid growth, is along the banks of river, and brooks that pass through a level country, and on the small islands which frequently occur in the midst of streams, in hollows or swales; also the soil which is composed of rich, soft, earthy particles, and which can be layed dry, are the most eligible sites for converting into oseries; and if such can be occasionally soaked with water during the dry months of summer, the situation may be considered as perfect.

Completely draining the site for a basket willow plantation is the first step towards its formation and the foundation of its success, and consequently of the profit to be derived from it.

All willows may be propagated by cutting, though some rare Alpine kinds with difficulty take root. Some species also grow very readily from seeds. The cuttings which may be grown in nurseries previously to their removal to their final situations, should be made of one year old wood, about a foot or sixteen inches in length, cut straight across at the lower end, and in a sloping direction at the upper end. They should be planted perpendicularly in the soil, to a depth of three fourths of their length, with the earth firmly pressed to them, more especially at their lower extremities. The reason the lower ends of the cuttings are cut directly across, and no sloping like the upper ends, is that they may form equal colossities all around, and consequently throw out an equal number of roots from these callosities on every side.

It has been found by experience that when a cutting is inserted in a sloping direction, roots are protruded nearly equally through all that part which is buried in the ground,