

Seasonable Hints—January.

BY HORRUS.

Let us begin the new year with a resolution to improve on all our works of the past; with wisdom gained by experience we will avoid the errors and profit by the mistakes of last year.

The failure of the wheat crop in many parts of the Province directs our attention to the importance of growing more variety and not confining ourselves to any one crop year after year.

Those having land suitable, and living near some shipping point (from our many railways who does not now-a-days?) would find it a profitable speculation to try fruit growing. Of course some years there is a glut in the fruit market from large crops, but then the large crops make up for small prices; but in no case is the fruit so cheap but that it does not yield a handsome return to the cultivator. The four most profitable fruits we consider to be apples, plums, currants and raspberries; for these there is always sufficient demand to use up profitably the most abundant supply.

Having determined to plant this coming spring any of the foregoing fruits, now will be a good time to make the necessary inquiries from your nearest nurseryman for stock wanted, guaranteed true to name, and at what price. Now, if it pays to grow fruit at all, it surely must pay best to grow the best varieties, and in planting for market purposes be careful to select them. Purchasers of fruit trees should insist on the nurseryman giving them a guarantee of the genuineness of the trees, so they would have a hold on them if the stock should not turn out as represented; by doing this they would make the dealers more careful as to how they filled orders.

The value of evergreen trees and hedges is more apparent during the winter than summer. How much more cheery and comfortable do farmers' homes appear when surrounded by clumps of evergreens than without. Although this subject is almost written to death, still we cannot resist the desire to again call the attention of the farmer to the importance of improving his place by planting. The man who values the opinions of his neighbors, or even of the stranger passing by, will not weary from planting and improving. Outside of all questions of home attractions, shelter, the modifying effect on the atmosphere, improvement of the artistic beauties of the location, the fact remains in the minds of others that the possessor of a farm or homestead, planted out with care and in good taste with clumps of trees, neat hedges, &c., must be a person of good taste and refinement; this in itself is sufficient inducement to make a man plant trees.

In laying out new grounds it is well to proceed slowly if you wish to make your work permanent, increasing yearly in beauty and utility. Work to a plan, making few or no mistakes, having little or nothing to undo, and thus economizing time, money and labor. If there are trees on the place to be improved, preserve them, adapting your plans to accommodate anything of value now growing on the grounds. By cutting back severely, almost into the main trunk, old trees of oak, elm (in fact, all our forest trees, both deciduous and evergreen, bear cutting with impunity), you will get a new, dense growth that will surprise you with its verdure and luxuriance. The winter season for this work is the best time.

In planting out a new place entirely it is well to have a good border prepared to serve as a nursery for all trees, &c., you may require in the adornment of your place; here trees from the woods or the nursery may be transplanted and kept growing to be planted when ready in the place you have

determined upon, after some careful study. Whereas the customary practice is to wait for the trees to arrive before deciding where they are severally to grow, and the consequence is, if the weather is hot and windy, they get crowded in without much attention to their different requirements or where they should be planted to the best advantage. We suggest these ideas for the particular reason that now you have time to read, think and plan, and so be prepared that when the season arrives for work you will lose no time.

Few people are aware of the value of the Lombardy poplar; though well known from the habit of its growth—tall and stately—it is not put to as much practical use as it deserves. The increasing scarcity of cedar for posts, and the difficulty to get timber for rails, may well cause the careful farmer to look about him for some other substitute, and that substitute is the Lombardy poplar. They may be grown in many ways to serve as fences. Cuttings of them may be planted two feet apart and allowed to grow up; they would in a few years

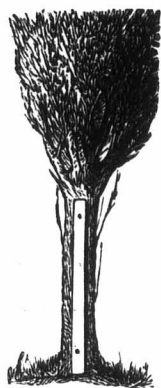


Fig. 1.

make a solid wall, impenetrable as a fence, and invaluable as a wind-break. If they grow up too high, they can be cut back to any height desired to again grow out in increased beauty. From their tapering, erect growth, they do not shade the ground and spoil the crops like any other tree. A

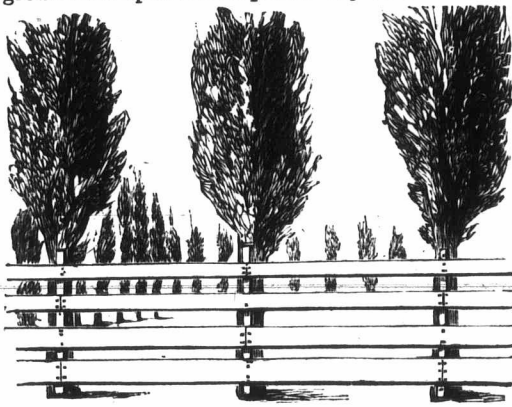


Fig. 2.

few of them growing about the farm-buildings would completely and effectually protect the buildings from being struck by lightning; for this alone they are of great value.

We illustrate one method of using them in fencing.

In Figure 1 the tree is shown with a scantling bolted to it by two bolts, one at the top and the other at the bottom: this serves to nail the boards of the fence to, for if nailed to the tree the nails would soon rust out.

In Figure 2 the trees are shown planted seven feet apart, serving for fence posts. Used in this way, and this method is not patented, the Lombardy poplar will prove of great service in fencing.

Wood of currants and gooseberries gathered and stored in cellars may be made into cuttings about ten inches long any time now; they should be tied in bundles and packed in sand. Trees or bushes for the garden put in cellars to winter over should

be examined for fear of being eaten by mice. Fruit should be carefully gone over, removing any decaying from amongst the sound and whole. Everything is now quiet out-doors, but be always on the alert for procuring manure, ashes, bones, &c., for fertilizing your fruit trees and vines.

House plants will require sprinkling to remove any dust from the leaves. A hot, dry atmosphere will bring off the leaves and destroy the flowers, if not frequently moistened. Remove any pot-bound plants into larger pots and fresh soil. An hour devoted to the window plants every day will be well spent, and your care will be rewarded by the increased growth of foliage and profusion of bloom.

Root Pruning.

When is the best time to root-prune? is a piece of information the villa gardener is sure to ask for. Here we can put forward such high authority as the late Dr. Lindley, who, in his standard work on "The Theory of Horticulture," remarks: If performed at all, root-pruning should take place in the autumn; for at that time the roots, like the other parts of a plant, are comparatively empty of fluid; but if deferred till the spring, then the roots are all distended with the fluid which has been collected in them during winter, and every part taken away, carries with it a portion of that nature which the plant has been laying up as the store upon which to commence its renewed growth. Another passage bearing on this matter is to the following purpose: Its effect (the act of removing a portion of a root) is proportionately to cut off the supply of food, and thus to arrest the rapid growth of the branches; and the connection between this and the production of fruit has already been explained.

November is a good month to root-prune, or even earlier. Advantage should be taken of dry, mild weather; not a time of frost and cold. The earlier it is done, the more time is allowed for the fibrous roots to lay hold on the soil, and this is a matter of some importance when, as sometimes happens, March and April are very warm months. —Exchange.

Cuttings.

A method of striking cuttings is practiced by some European horticulturists which is very successful. The method is based on the idea that the rootlets of the cuttings should be developed before the buds begin to appear, and when the latter develop first they appropriate all the substance of the cutting, and the rootlets do not develop properly. To accomplish the object, the cuttings are put into the ground, in the fall, in light soil, the lower end of the cuttings being upward and slightly inclined. After placing them all properly, they are covered with a layer of soil four to six inches deep, and at the approach of cold weather, more covering is added, with stable litter, etc., to prevent frost from reaching the cuttings. In the spring the extra covering is removed, leaving but four to six inches as at first. The heat of the sun penetrates to the upper end and develops the rootlets while the buds at the lower end (the upper end of the cutting) remain dormant. The cuttings are then taken up and properly set out, right end up, and a healthy, vigorous plant is the result.

Planting Trees.

I have transplanted many hundred forest trees in the last ten years, and I have rarely lost a tree, and most of them were set in the fall. One of the most important rules to be observed is, before taking up a tree mark it in some manner so that you will know which is the north side, so as to be able to reset it in exactly the position it grew in the woods. This may seem to many of no importance, but to those who know that there is in the bark and wood of all trees a radical difference between the north and south sides, the north side being close-grained and tough, while the south side is invariably more open-grained and brash, or soft, the importance will be seen. If this is done, your tree does not have to undergo a complete change in all its parts, and is ready to start off and grow at the proper time as readily as though it had not been moved. —Letter to Prairie Farmer.