

## Barren Seedling Vines.

To the Editor.

SIR,—In the September number of the CANADA FARMER is a query from the *Rural New Yorker* as to the best means to be adopted to render fruitful a barren seedling vine. Except in the case of hybrids, in which the union is remote, I cannot admit the theory of barrenness without a traceable cause.

In the correspondent's vine under notice blossoms were formed freely, but a few hours after opening strewed the ground. Many English gardeners make the same complaint of grapes in the vineries under their charge, notably of the Muscat of Alexandria and Canon Hall Muscat. There are also several other varieties that are bad setters; splendid bunches appear to open freely, only to strew the ground. First-class gardeners manage these shy setters so that they set as well as Black Hamburgs; but then they can command a very strong dry heat at will; also the laterals are from eighteen inches to two feet apart. Those acquainted with these shy-setting grapes know there is a very copious flow of sap in these vines till after setting, forming gummy exudations on the leaves, wood, &c., affecting consequently the pollen, which requires a much greater dry heat to ripen and dry it so as to fit it to pass down the receptacles of the stigma. Noticing how on all occasions, whenever a bunch rested on the upper side of the leaf (instead of under it), and so received the full heat and light of the sun, how well these bunches set, I formed the idea that if all bunches at the time of flowering were so exposed they would set equally well; nor was I disappointed. From that time forth I carefully placed the flowering bunch on the leaf, or tied the leaf back so as to give it the full sunshine, and the Muscats set as well as the Hamburgs in the same heat and same vinery. But supposing your theory of imperfect organs of fructification to be correct, I hold it would be occasioned by poor soil, or more likely unripe wood; it is so common to leave vines to grow nearly as they like till flowering time, and then to rush knife in hand, cut off a foot or so from each lateral, and the sudden cessation of demand induces a torpid action of the root till the new formed buds expand. In the meantime the starved blossoms expand, to fall off for want of that sap their foolish owners thought they were taking the most sure means of getting. Now no fruit is found. They are left to themselves again till autumn, and then the sap that should be stored up in round, hard, plump buds, is cut off in long sprays and laterals.

Let the owner of the barren vine try careful training and thinning of shoots and laterals, and exposing the blossoms, not bunches, to the full and direct action of the sun, and report progress.

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## Entomology.

## Entomological Queries and Replies.

LARGE WATER-BUG.—MR. J. S. WALSH, Co. of Norfolk.—The "small beast picked up on the steps," that you recently sent us, is a specimen of the gigantic Water Bug (*Belostoma grandis*), one of the largest insects that we have in this country. It lives in water, and feeds on aquatic insects and small animals; occasionally it flies about at night, and comes into houses, apparently attracted by light. Though rather an alarming looking creature, it is perfectly harmless. The other insect sent us is an *Asilus* fly, a species that feeds voraciously upon other insects, catching them when on the wing. It may be readily distinguished by its long tapering body, dusty wings, and swift flight. The specimen before us is nearly an inch and a half in length, while its narrow wings expand nearly two inches. A large species, found in the Western States, preys upon the Honey-bee, and often commits great havoc among the hives. Our Canadian species, so far as we know, are beneficial, destroying noxious insects, and not interfering with the bees. The larvae of these insects are vegetable feeders, living in the ground, and deriving their sustenance from the roots of plants. The larva of one species (*A. sericeus*, Say.) feeds upon the roots of the rhubarb, but is not sufficiently common to attract much notice.

LARVA ON BEET ROOT PLANTS.—SARAWAK.—The larva that you sent us from your beet root plants was unfortunately dead and shrivelled up beyond recognition when it reached us. Has it been at all destructive? If you send any more specimens, please send several enclosed in a stiff pasteboard, wooden or tin box, and with some leaves of the food-plant as well.

PLANT-LICE AND LADY-BIRDS ON WINDOW BEANS.—W. LUCAS, Cartwright.—The insects that you "found in hundreds in a bed of English beans," and which you supposed to be feeding upon the plants, are the larvae of a common species of Lady-bird (*Coccinella novemnotata*). Instead of being injurious to your beans, they are your very best friends—in fact they are the most useful insects that we have in this country, being sworn foes of all plant-lice, and devourers of the eggs and larvae of a large number of other noxious insects, among others the Colorado Potato Beetle, the Apple Codling-moth, &c. You casually mention that your "beans are also covered with lice." These are your real enemies, and not the larger Lady-birds. The latter are attracted to your plants by the lice, and but for them would never go near your beans. The Plant-lice (*Aphides*), about which we have often written in this journal, are excessively destructive to vegetation of all kinds, appearing usually in innumerable

numbers, and sucking out the sap—the life-blood—of whatever they are upon.

BEETLES ON PLUM-TREES.—A SUBSCRIBER, Lancaster.—We regret that your communication with others should have remained so long unattended to. The editor of this department was laid up for a fortnight with rather a severe attack of illness, and since his recovery he has been travelling about in order to fully recover his health and strength. He trusts that his correspondents, and all who take an interest in his department of this journal, will excuse his unavoidable shortcomings. The small beetles which "literally covered your plum trees, commencing to appear about June 20th, are apparently a species of *Cynphon*—a small genus of beetles that frequent water-plants. We are not at all sure of our determination, not having yet had time to examine them thoroughly. We shall be glad to learn further particulars concerning them; whether, for instance, they fed upon the leaves of the plum tree, or only rested upon them; what damage they did, if any; how long they remained; and anything further that you may have noticed respecting them. If destructive, they are a new enemy to the plum tree, and we should like to know more about them.

SLUGS ON CHERRY AND PEAR LEAVES.—D. S., Dingle, Township of Grey.—The insects that you complain of as affecting your pear and cherry tree leaves are the Common Slug of these trees, the larvae of a Saw-fly, (*Selandria cerasi*, Peck.) They may be destroyed by dusting them with ashes or quick-lime, or by drenching them with cresylic, whale oil, or other strong soap-suds. You will find a full account of the insect in the CANADA FARMER for Sept. 1, 1865, page 262.

GRASSHOPPERS.—J. K., Clark, complains that the grasshoppers are doing an immense deal of damage this year to wheat, oats, barley, pasture-fields, and in fact to almost every green thing. We have observed similar complaints in the local newspapers in other parts of the country. The best and most profitable remedy for them that we know of is to keep large flocks of turkeys, and allow them free range over the fields. They will devour immense numbers of grasshoppers, and will be found to bring in a very satisfactory addition to the housewife's purse at Christmas time. We know of no other effectual remedy for this pest.

## Trapping the Squash Bug.

I have found the "Ransom Curculio Trap" of more service in catching the stinking squash bug than the little Turk, for which it was specially recommended. I lay two or three bits of shingle or thin board near the hill of plants, the ground being a little rough so that the bugs can crawl under them, as they will do every cool night, and on turning over these covers early in the morning the bugs can be easily crushed with the sole of the boot or with a flat stick.