

* The Farm. *

The Patted Cows of Holland.

Holland has been termed the cow's paradise, because there everything is done to make a cow's life one of beauty, comfort and even luxury.

In summer and in winter the cow is the one object of the thoughtful, loving care of the farmer and his family.

Early in May the cattle are turned out to pasture where the grass grows most luxuriantly, the fields being mowed and fed to cattle on alternate years.

Ditches from 15 to 20 feet wide, of deep blue water, separate the fields; these are spanned by rustic bridges having bolted gates to prevent intruders among the cattle.

Scattered throughout each field are scratching posts for the comfort of the kine, for even the well-cared-for, sleek-coated Helstein-Friesian cattle enjoy a good scratching occasionally.

Many farmers are so thoughtful of their cattle as to put on them linen covers to protect them from flies and other insects, as well as from the raw winds.

In the midst of exquisite emerald-green fields of from twelve to fifteen acres each, with abundant water always at hand, the cows spend at least eight or nine months of the year, coming together in squads toward 5 o'clock daily to await the milkers with the great shining brass cans.

In November, when the weather becomes too cold for the cows to remain out of doors, they are driven into their respective farmyards to be sized up by their owners; that is, the farmer will pair them off according to their height and size, and then let them enter the cow stable to take their places in the long row of stalls on one side of the really elegant cow stables, the tallest couple to occupy the centre stall and the couples to graduate in height down toward either end of the row.

There are frequently fifty or more head in one herd, and you would open your eyes in amazement could you enter one of these Holland stables. They are built as a part of the farmer's house, and are separated from the living-rooms by a glass door, so Hans and his frau can sit in their best room and yet keep an eye on their beloved cows, for it is said that a Dutch farmer thinks of his cows all day and dreams of them at night.—(C. A. Urann in National Rural.

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To Hasten Ripening of Tomatoes.

The ripening of tomatoes may be hastened considerably by tying the plants to stakes and pruning off the sprouts which come up around the base of the plants, the object being to get fruit from the first blooms and not allow the lower branches, or sprouts, which come up later, to produce fruit. By keeping off these sprouts the entire strength of the plant is thrown into the upper part. In order to carry out this plan successfully the seed should be sown in a hotbed some time in March and the plants set in the field as early as it is safe, selecting a piece of ground that is not too rich. A sandy soil is all right, but the highest portions or knolls are better than lower, richer lands.

The plants should be tied to stakes at once, and as they grow the tying should be repeated. It will be noticed that the first blooms appear at the tops of the plants, and the aim should be to give the fruit which sets from these the full strength of the plant. Sprouts will soon appear near the ground, and these must be broken off promptly and kept off during the entire season. It is not necessary to pinch the tops of the plants in any way, but as they grow keep them tied to the stake, which needs to be about five feet high. Ordinary tomatoes can be grown in this manner from one to two weeks earlier than if the plants were allowed to fall over on the ground. In giving the foregoing advice "The Ohio Farmer" adds that early varieties should, of course, be selected, and one of the best for this purpose is Dwarf Champion, but Advance, Ruby and several others are suitable also.—(Connecticut Farmer.

Trees for Drainage.

It is a popular belief that trees, about a house tend to make it damp. It is true that after heavy rains a dwelling with trees surrounding it takes more time to dry out than one not so surrounded. On the contrary, it is just as true that where trees are the soil is very much drier than it would be otherwise. Some years ago the daily papers had much to say of the drainage of a malarious district in Rome by the planting largely of the fast-growing blue gum tree of Australia, Eucalyptus globulus. There is no doubt that this rapid-growing tree would quickly change the character of a half-swamp, as it grows fast and has thick foliage. When there is a lot of trees full of foliage there is great call for moisture from the ground. The roots are drawing it in continually, and this, in the long run, accomplishes as much as a system of drainage would do.

I have myself witnessed the great change brought about by the cutting down and clearing of trees from a low piece of land. What was a fairly dry place while the trees stood became almost a swamp. It is not as easy to start evergreens in such a spot as it is deciduous trees; otherwise they would be better for the purpose, as there is more evaporation from them in the winter season. But it must not be supposed that there is entire rest on the part of a deciduous tree in winter. The roots are active, and, especially toward spring, an enormous lot of water is taken from the earth by the roots of a large tree. This is why trees near dwellings which are in damp situations are so valuable. The cellar of a house which is surrounded by large trees will be very much drier than before the trees were there. This I have seen many examples of. There is no need to plant trees so close that the branches will reach to the house, and it is not at all desirable that the limbs overhang it.

Deciduous trees are better than evergreen for planting near a house. An evergreen is not a top spreader, and affords but little shade. The deciduous one gives the shade in summer, when it is needed, and its roots are drying the soil to a great extent in winter, as well as largely in summer. One of the best of trees for the purpose is the common white maple. It grows quickly, makes a good deal of foliage, and it is much more of a surface rooter than many trees, and this is what makes it so good for drainage. Those who may have a piece of land that would be improved by being drier, and would not object to trees doing the work for them, should plant some. The result would please them very much.—(Practical Farmer.

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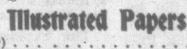
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