

Agriculture.

HOW TO SAVE SEED.

In other words, "how to prevent crops from deteriorating," is a most important question lying at the foundation of all agricultural and horticultural prosperity. Nature's law is "multiply and replenish," no matter as to the particular quality, but everything as to quantity. "The survival of the fittest" governs the result. But Nature's operations are too slow for our short lives, so the business of the cultivator is to aid mother Nature, and thus reach the best results in the shortest periods.

It is a fact too well known, that, ordinarily, crops deteriorate, and this, for one reason, because the seed becomes weakened. The story of "Dreer's Improved Lima Beans" will illustrate the idea and explain the whole *modus operandi* of saving of seed.

Some years ago a gardener asked our Mr. Saunders how he could improve the Lima bean. He was told to find, if possible, a pod having at least four beans; the next season to plant one, the largest and best of these, the next season to select as before one bean, the one which not only seemed to the eye the largest and best, but the one that could weigh the most, and then to pursue this method for several years. The result we all know is a really great improvement of that delicious vegetable.

One has asked why are our melons so inferior now-a-days? The answer is that pains are now taken in saving the seed. There is a variety of musk melon sold by one of our seedsmen, the "Hunter" melon, which illustrates this point. A Mr. Hunter received, some years since from abroad, seed of a very choice melon. These were planted, and the seed of only the very best were saved. In this manner has the seed been selected, and now after much more than twenty years this variety commands the highest price in our markets, and the seed sells for \$3 per pound, while other varieties can be had for fifty cents, and are dear at that.

I have seen a stalk of corn bearing ten ears. Of course, this nine-fold increase came from selecting the seed, at first, of a stalk that bore two good ears, then there would be a few with three ears, and so on, until the grand result was reached. I know that many farmers say that if they can get one good ear on each stalk they will be satisfied. Well, such are not very particular, and will buy corn from a neighbor's crib and plant the best of this. Of course, they get only an ordinary crop. Is not this the reason that growing Indian corn has become such a poor and unpaying business? For my part I will let the idiots grow this corn, and I will purchase it in the fall for less than two dollars per barrel.

We have many new varieties of wheat, but if I were growing it I would screen out from one hundred bushels say one bushel of the largest and plumpest berries, and sowing this, would, the next season do likewise, and would ultimately get the very best seed wheat. There is one other idea involved in this matter to which we all need to take heed. It is the seed that impoverishes the soil. The more seed the greater the grain, and therefore the greater need of more fertilizing.

Well, brother farmers, let us be wide awake, intelligent and teachable, and thus make our business the noblest and grandest in the world. G. F. NEWBURN, in *Am. Rural Home*.

FARMERS AND FARMING.

Secretary W. I. Chamberlain, of the Ohio Board of Agriculture, says there is a basis of truth in the remarks made by a vote-seeking stump speaker on "the intelligence and superior judgment and virtues of farmers." He believes that successful agriculture requires much thought, and that husbandmen generally read, study and think more upon their business than any other class engaged chiefly in physical labor. No doubt they do—they are obliged to. Men devoted to any handicraft have all the material and the work under their eye and within their own entire control, to shape and modify as they see fit. But the farmer's task is not merely mechanical. Deep mysteries and supernatural influence surround all he does. He is a co-worker with beneficent nature—beneficent yet inexorable. He must perforce study her secrets and closely observe her tendencies. He is, to all intents and purposes one of her priests. How can he be else than firm, intelligent and devout—and independent, too, if he tills his own acres?

Horticulture.

QUINCES.

In the *New England Farmer* the statement is boldly made that a really good bushel of quinces has not been seen in Faneuil Hall market, Boston, in three years, and the correspondent goes on to say:

The quince tree is a gross feeder, and demands care and cultivation, that is all the secret there is about it. It is the common practice to let the tree grow at will, without pruning or trimming, until it becomes merely a straggling bush, made up of a multitude of small stems and twisted branches, unable to bear the weight of the fruit, or to withstand the wind. The proper practice is exactly reverse of this. The trees should be set in deep, rich, and damp soil, which should, however, be thoroughly drained; they should be at least ten or twelve feet apart. All lateral branches should be pruned off and the stem cut back to eighteen inches or two feet, and tied to a firm stake. During the summer it will make considerable growth and after it has finished growing in the fall, it should be again trimmed. Manure heavily every year, and prune carefully. The first year that the head is made, three shoots may be allowed to grow; cut these back the next season, and each will send forth two, making six principal branches.

On a tree thus formed, the fruit is borne on small stout shoots extending down the sides of the branches, and all decayed or superabundant shoots should be carefully removed, and do not be afraid to thin out the fruit. The quince tree likes salt, and an occasional scattering of salt over the surface of the ground not too close to the main stem, will be of benefit. The only enemy to be feared is the borer. Against him the only defence is "eternal vigilance." If they once get into the trees they must be poked out of their holes by means of a wire, or if the mischief has proceeded too far before it is discovered, the tree may as well be cut down first as last. Paper tied loosely around the trunks and tarred on the outside, the earth being carefully drawn up to the same all around, will be found generally efficacious in preventing them from depositing their eggs."

MARY—Who had that little lamb—
Had Teeth as white as snow—
She always brushed them twice a day
With "FRAGRANT" you know.

PEAS.

Peas are among the things to look after early. Get your seed early: The peas will stand a good deal of light late frosts. Early in the spring sow in double rows, which are the most economical. The manure should be fine. Phosphates are excellent if lightly mixed with the well pulverized soil of the drill. Cover with leaves and straw, after they are covered, and when the days grow warm uncover, and you will have fine early peas. The sprouts will stand a little frost nipping and grow again. The peas that come early from the South are the Philadelphia variety, good for the market, but not to our liking. The best dwarf variety we know is Early Premium Gem. The best high kind for very early is the Alpha—perhaps not for market. If we were choosing one very early variety it would be Premium Gem. The Champion of England is the best general and late pea.—*N. Y. Herald*.

PROGRESS OF HORTICULTURE.—Among most gratifying evidences of progress are the numerous acquisitions of new and valuable varieties, by which the season of our fruits is greatly prolonged with the accession of early and late varieties. By the better knowledge in the keeping and packing of fruits, and the facilities of transportation, our markets are now supplied with fruits throughout the whole year. Instead of the strawberry for three or four weeks, as formerly, we now have it four or five months, the peach from four to six months, the pear from eight to ten months, the orange and apple the year round, and the smaller fruits in their season; so he who has the means may replenish his table daily with such variety as no other nation can produce. The process of hybridization is simple, whether by the air, insects, or the hand of man, and we have only to have due regard to the characteristics of the parents from which we breed. Thus, as it were, "line upon line and precept upon precept," I have endeavored to impress on you the importance of this branch of our science, and as it was my first, so it shall be my continual and last advice: "Plant the most mature and perfect seeds of the most hardy, vigorous, and valuable varieties; and as a shorter process, insuring more certain and happy results, cross or hybridize your best fruits."

Professor J. L. Budd, of the Iowa Agricultural College, says, "Trees blight least: 1. In orchards on light colored soils, in elevated airy positions. 2. On soils shaded the preceding season by a succulent growth of second-crop clover or of buckwheat. 3. In orchards cultivated in the early part of the preceding season, and shaded the latter part with marsh hay or other rubbish. 4. In orchards kept whitewashed on trunks and main limbs the preceding season. 5. Where the trunks and lower forks are shaded on the south by walls, tight board fences, low building, evergreens, or even boards so placed as to maintain a lower temperature of the tree during July and August. 6. Where orchards are exclusively planted with varieties indigenous to countries with very hot, dry summers, such as the inter-continental steppes of northern Europe and Asia. Trees are most subject to blight: 1. On dark colored soils exposed to the sun, in sheltered positions. 2. In places where the reflected heat of tight board fences, walls, wooden buildings, or where exposed to blasts of heated air passing over dry grain or grass stubble, heated

roads, etc. 3. Where the varieties are indigenous to sections with relatively humid and cool summers. These general conclusions point to excessive heat and aridity of air as an exciting cause of blight, especially when taken in connection with the fact that blight is only known in countries with dryer and hotter summer air than is known in the native ranges of our best varieties of the apple and pear."

MANURE FOR STRAWBERRIES.—A correspondent of the *Fruit Recorder*, says: "An experiment made last year by myself may not come amiss at this time with those who grow strawberries. I procured half a hoghead, filled it with rain water, and put into it one-quarter pound of ammonia and one-quarter pound of common nitre. When the strawberry plants were blossoming out, I gave them a sprinkling of the solution at evening twice a week until the fruit was nearly ripe. The result was double the amount of fruit on those where the liquid was applied to where none of the liquid was applied."

POULTRY.

HOW TO CARE FOR GOSSLINGS.

After the first few days regimen of chopped eggs and nettles young gossings may be given a mixture of potatoes, meal, and green vegetables, cut up very finely. The nettle, however, suits them better than any other green food, as the juice of that plant seems especially favorable to their digestion, which is so rapid that young geese must be fed five or six times a day. With them, as with all other young animals, it is necessary to give abundant nourishment from the very first. Later on they will eat beet root, either raw or cooked, and most green vegetables, as well as any sort of grain, and are especially fond of fruit. The Toulouse goose has a rather inconvenient habit of seeking her own provender, and if she has any chance of doing so will dig up and consume any number of crocuses and other bulbs. It is not, however, to be supposed that they will be given the *entre* of our gardens, but the present writer having once suffered severely from an incursion of these marauders thinks proper to warn others against a like misadventure. Whoever wishes to have success with geese must be careful to give them a house which is large and airy enough and plenty of clean bedding. The abominable practice of letting ducks and geese sleep in the hen house cannot be sufficiently reprehended. The goose, in particular, is a bird which likes cleanliness, and which, indeed, can never thrive properly where this is wanting.—*N. Y. Herald*.

POULTRY MANAGEMENT.

The Plymouth Rock breed of fowls is steadily and rapidly gaining ground, in all sections of the country. The mere fact that it is of American origin has much to do with its popularity with many, though its real merits are sure to convince even the most doubting of its value. They can now, when properly mated, be relied upon to produce evenly marked offspring, and the last couple of seasons the average size has been materially increased, until now they stand but little inferior to the Asiatic—the Brahmas and Cochins—in point of size and weight. They are the "general purpose fowl," and fanciers and farmers alike find them a source of pleasure and profit. They are of good size, feather up quickly when young, are good layers of fine