

as three or four inches above the earth where hilling is practised, and still higher in the case of ridge planting where no hilling is done and where cleaning, which precedes hilling, is not practised.

The utility of priming will be easily understood. It relieves the plant of all valueless leaves which would never come to maturity, and which, owing to their being close to the ground, afford a harbour for insects. Through the removal of such leaves, all the vigour of the plant will rise to the higher parts of the stem.

TOPPING.

It is only after a proper priming that the grower is able to determine just how much of the plant should be topped, that is to say, to judge of the number of leaves which should remain on each plant, proportionate to the plant's vigour and the weather conditions.

Topping should be done early, *i.e.*, as soon as the plant has formed the required number of leaves and the operation may be done without injury to the top leaves. As far as possible, the stem should be cut or topped on a level with the highest leaf left on the stalk.

Early topping affords more time for the complete development and better ripening of the top leaves. Late topping may cause the top leaves to remain small and thick and of inferior quality. On a properly topped plant, the top leaves should be almost as fully developed as the mid-stem leaves.

SUCKERING.

After the topping is done, numerous suckers will appear at the base of the leaves and the top of the stem. They should be carefully removed.

Suckering is done to allow the plant to reserve all its strength for the nutrition of the remaining leaves. However, it is not necessary to destroy all of the short suckers as soon as they appear. This operation need not be started until the suckers are four or five inches long. The whole plantation should be gone over systematically, row after row, starting from the end which has been topped first, until the other end is reached, assuming that the topping has been done in the same systematic way.

Generally speaking, it will be sufficient to do this operation three times, in order to keep the plantation in good condition.

The last suckering should be done one or two days before harvesting. On no account should suckers be taken into the curing barn.

SEED PLANTS.

Plants reserved for the production of seed require close attention. Such plants are, of course, not topped. The best plants in the plantation should be selected for this purpose, and the selection should be made early. They should be marked or tagged, and their development watched with the greatest care. Any plants showing the slightest sign of disease or of a weak constitution, should not be kept for seed, but only such as will unite, with the best possible conditions of growth, all the characteristics of the type which it is desired to propagate.