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## HORTICULTURE

### Alfalfa in the Orchard

Would it be advisable to sow alfalfa in an orchard?—A. C. York Co., Ont.

I should prefer not to sow alfalfa in an orchard, as injury would be done to the fruit trees. The fact that the alfalfa would be considerably shaded would be another reason for not sowing it in the orchard. The best orchard practice, unless in exceptional cases, is to begin cultivation early in the spring and dig thorough, clean cultivation until mid-summer. A cover crop of some kind could then be sown and alfalfa might be used, or better red clover. This would, of course, be turned under early next spring.

It would be better for the alfalfa to have the ground all to itself. Better growth would be made than if it were shaded, and there would be much less difficulty experienced in cutting and making hay than if the trees were occupying the ground as well.—Prof. J. W. Crow, O. A. C., Guelph, Ont.

### Varieties for Durham County

I am inquiring in fruit farming exclusively, apple and winter fruit mostly. I would like to know if you would give me any information as to what kind of land is best adapted to fruit and what kind of fruit would you advise to plant.—W. H. B., Durham Co., Ont.

I am not entirely familiar with the soils of your locality, but judge that you have plenty of good soil. You have had in that vicinity quite a large number of splendid orchards. I think you will usually find that the best orchards are on a fairly heavy soil; not too dry, of course, so as to bake hard. One thing I have noticed in your section particularly is that tile draining is almost absolutely necessary, especially on the heavier soils. I would advise the planting of an orchard on soil of the heavy nature, with thorough under-draining.

As a rule, I think you will find the best orchards on sloping land, not as a rule, on hill-tops or in hollows. The hill-top, is, however, provided the soil is suitable, much more desirable than the other extreme. The northern or eastern slope would in your locality give the best results. For planting in the vicinity of Bowmanville, or in most sections along the northern shore of Lake Ontario, I would recommend any of the standard winter varieties, such as Baldwin, Spy and Greening. There is a good market for fall apples, such as Alexander and Blenheim, but I think I would confine myself to winter varieties, having in mind, of course, the export trade altogether.—Prof. J. W. Crow, O. A. C., Guelph, Ont.

### Vegetable Growers Convene

The injustices that producers suffer due to excessive freight rates and unsatisfactory freight service, was the subject of much discussion at the last annual meeting of the Ontario Vegetable Growers' Association, held in Toronto recently. Mr. E. Adams, of Leamington, gave an instance from his own experience. He had sent out a car of produce each day for a certain time; but instead of arriving on the market one car a day, they came in bunches of four and five, thus causing a glut and reduced prices. A motion was carried asking the government to afford some relief to vegetable growers in securing an outlet for surplus stock by reducing freight rates. A committee was appointed to act in conjunction with a similar committee from the Ontario Fruit Grow-

ers' Association, to meet the Railway Commissioners in regard to freight rates.

The Association placed themselves on record as being in favor of admitting traction engines free of duty, a move that would be of inestimable value to farmers generally. President Delworth, of Weston, did not extend much sympathy to consumers in their complaints re the high cost of living. He said that by buying in large quantities, especially for the winter supply, as people used to do years ago, would effect a great saving. Mr. Delworth also urged that the Association's efforts to secure a Dominion standard of weights and measures, be continued.

The benefits of cooperative purchasing were dealt with by W. J. Kerr, Ottawa, and George Phillips, St. Catharines. The two growers who have had experience in purchasing large quantities of seeds and other supplies. In the discussion on this subject, it was suggested that the Association try cooperative packing and selling through their own agents, say, in the mining districts of New Ontario, in the Prairie Provinces and in England.

Addresses of an educational nature were given by A. H. McLennan, B. S. A., Guelph; T. G. Rayner, B. S. A., Ottawa; J. J. Jarvis, Byron; Roy Ellis, Leamington, and Prof. Hutt, of Guelph.

### Preparing for Asparagus

Will you kindly send me your formula for making asparagus beds? The soil in my garden is black clay loam about 12 inches deep, under a stiff yellow clay. A tile drain runs through the lot 55 feet wide. Must we take out the yellow clay? Our man says that it is no good. I will soil to green house (instead of ordinary manure)—G. R. H., York Co., Ont.

I judge from your enquiry that the stiff yellow clay overlying the black loam is the cause of a subsoil. If such is the case, it would, of course, be better to remove it if possible before undertaking to prepare an asparagus bed. If, however, it is a natural soil which has been worked, it might be possible to continue to use it.

To prepare for asparagus, the land should be very heavily manured. Forty or even 50 tons of stable manure an acre would not be too much. This should be well worked in, and the soil should be well cultivated for at least a year before planting. It is impossible to make the soil too rich for asparagus, and because of that fact, barnyard manure may be used in almost any quantity provided it is well rotted and thoroughly incorporated into the soil. It has the additional effect as well of making a soil more porous and much more easily worked. You state that the land is already drained but in a heavy soil, such as you describe, it is not likely that one drain will successfully carry the water away from a 55 foot strip.

The two most popular varieties of Asparagus are Connover's Colossal and Purple Argenteuil.

In preparing for planting the ground should be deeply and thoroughly worked. Ten or 12 inches is not too deep. We prefer to plant in rows three and a half feet apart, setting the plants 30 to 36 inches in the row. It is customary to plow out a deep furrow and set the plants fully eight inches into the ground.—Prof. J. W. Crow, O. A. C., Guelph, Ont.

When it is not possible to plow close to the trees, I would advise cutting away the growth of the fall with a sharp hoe as this will aid in keeping down vermin, insects, etc. In a bearing orchard I do not consider it important to plow close to the trees as the root system which feeds the trees is outside.—W. T. Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist, Ottawa.

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