

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

Covering Strawberry Plants.

BY ELLIS F. AUGUSTINE, LAMBTON CO.

By the end of this month, or as soon after as the ground is frozen sufficiently hard to bear the weight of team and wagon, all strawberry plants should be covered for the winter. It is often stated that this covering is not required before January, and that the work may even be delayed much later if the ground remains hard frozen. Some claim that the leaves of the previous summer's growth are of no more use to the plant, and all that is required is to protect the roots from being heaved by the alternate freezing and thawing of early spring. This is an erroneous idea, and no young fruit grower should be misled by it into making what will prove a very serious mistake. The hearts as well as the roots of the tender plants require protection, for often after a twelve-hour gale of searching zero wind they will crumble to the touch like so many dry leaves; this we once learned through costly experience. We now find that the plants are much more vigorous if covered while the leaves retain their summer freshness, and that such plants will give double the yield of fruit of others whose covering has been delayed until all the outer leaves have turned brown.

Forest leaves are often recommended as a covering. These may answer for a small garden plot, if brush is laid upon them to keep them in place; but if used in an open field, without other protection, the first heavy wind will scatter them. Marsh hay is also recommended, and no doubt will prove most satisfactory of all in sections where it can be readily procured, but there are comparatively few localities where it is to be had. Cut corn stalks have been tried with excellent results, but are altogether too expensive for general use.

The only covering which can be generally used is wheat, oat or barley straw. Pea straw is too compact, and when used freely and weighted by heavy snows, often causes the plants to rot. But whatever kind of straw is used, it must be entirely clean, if a large amount of extra work is to be avoided; this we also learned by experience. Ten or twelve years ago we had several acres of fine plants to be covered. A stack of old straw was offered to us at a low price, so we purchased it and spread it carefully over the field. But later on we found that we had seeded that field heavily to Canada thistles, pig weed, rag weed, wild mustard, and many other kinds of foul weeds—equally difficult to eradicate. It was many years before the field was entirely rid of these pests, and it is needless to state that that was the most expensive covering we ever purchased. (Right here I wish to state that this one mistake cost us more than the subscription price of half a dozen good farm journals, like the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, for as many years; and as it is the province of every good farm paper to give just such experiences, it is the farmer that leads who avoids committing like errors.) If one is not sure that the straw is entirely free of weed and timothy seed—and how little straw is, is shown by the multitude of weeds which invariably spring up where the straw is thrown to the ground in unloading—the following plan should be adopted: Build a scaffold of poles or rails beside the stack, four or five feet from the ground. Three persons are then required for the work: one pitches the straw in small forkfuls upon the scaffold, where the second, after shaking it up well, passes it on to the loader; in this way, practically all weed seeds are shaken from the straw; and in strawberry culture even wheat is considered a weed.

The straw, when unloaded, must not be allowed to remain in large heaps more than a day or two, or the plants beneath will be smothered. It should be spread evenly over the whole field to a depth of two or three inches; more than this will smother the plants. In the spring, part of this should be raked off the rows and tramped down in the paths between, leaving just what the plants can readily push their way through. The straw about the plants acts as a mulch and keeps the fruit clean during heavy rains, while that between the rows will largely prevent any weeds from springing up; of course no cultivation is given till after the fruit is harvested.

This work of early covering and thorough mulching is one of the chief factors to success in strawberry growing.

Nova Scotia School of Horticulture.

We are pleased to record that the Nova Scotia School of Horticulture at Wolfville reopened on Nov. 1, entering upon its third year with greatly improved facilities and most encouraging prospects generally. Prof. E. E. Faville, the Director, will gladly furnish intending students, or others, any information desired regarding the institution.

Too many farmers' fruit gardens are seldom entered after the fruit is all picked. This is all wrong if a crop is desired next season. All weeds, dead wood, trimmings and rubbish should be removed and every plant and bush protected for winter. Give the ground a coat of fine farmyard manure, and then it will be no fault of yours if a crop be not obtained in 1896.

POULTRY.

Fitting Poultry for the Shows.

Now that the fall exhibitions are over, and the winter poultry shows some distance in the future, a few pointers on the method of keeping the fowls in the pink of condition may be appreciated by some new beginners.

A bird to be in first-class show form must be in the best of health. This rule, which holds good with all stock, is fundamental, all the rest being subordinate to it. A bird, too, must be plump to stand any chance of winning a premium, but it is not desirable to retain this plumpness after the show is over. In fact, the best results are always obtained by keeping birds which are intended for exhibition in only fair condition up till within a few weeks of the show, when they should be put on special treatment, which will give them the much-desired bloom. Mr. R. Gordon, in Farming World, says: "Three weeks' special treatment before a show is generally all that is required; and when the birds arrive home again they should be put on plainer fare until such time as they are wanted for show purposes again."

"Different sorts of birds require different treatment. Games, etc., which require to be shown in very short, hard plumage, should receive very little soft food, only sufficient in which to give some of the highly concentrated nitrogenous foods, such as lean meat, liver, etc. A little hemp seed should be given occasionally, and canary seed may well form a considerable proportion of their diet. Game fowls require a good-sized grass run in order that they may obtain a strong muscular development."

The above-mentioned writer claims that soft-feathered breeds may have one meal of soft food daily, with an allowance of boiled liver. Hemp seed and wheat may be given in moderation, and it is the practice of one of Ontario's most successful poultrymen to add a little tincture of iron to their drinking-water, which has the effect of giving the face and comb a brilliant red. Indian corn should not be given to white feathered birds, as it has a strong tendency to give a yellowish tinge to the feathers. It has the same effect on the legs, and therefore should be given in moderate quantities to Plymouth Rocks, Brown Leghorns, etc. Oatmeal has also a good effect upon the yellow leg, and may take the place of corn in such breed as have yellow legs, and plumage that corn would injure.

Birds with light-colored plumage suffer from tanning when exposed to strong rays of the sun; however, this factor has not much force after this season of the year. There are two especial conditions in which they should not be exposed to strong sun rays: 1st, when the birds are moulting, and 2nd, when the plumage is at all wet, as at such conditions the color tans very readily. Not only do light-colored birds suffer by strong sun rays, but such as barred Plymouth Rocks sunburn to a rusty brown quite easily.

The feathery-footed Asiatic breeds require careful looking after in order to keep the masses of foot feathers from being broken and otherwise destroyed. A grass lawn, kept very short, makes a good run for them. No heavy breeds, especially if feathery footed, should be allowed to roost, but should be bedded at night on sawdust or fine hay or straw. When white birds require washing before going to show, great care and some practice is necessary to do it well. They should never be sent to an exhibition before they are trained and accustomed to being examined, as the judge will have to do. A little acquaintance with the show pen at home will give them confidence when they arrive at the place they have been fitted for. An occasional dusting with insect powder will keep them comfortable, so far as the absence of vermin will conduce. A constant supply of clean water, sharp grit and green food are indispensable at all times.

Eggs and Meat.

BY M. MAW.

Poultry raisers often fail to make their stock pay because they do not keep the right kind, and breed from grade roosters. It is an acknowledged fact that the first cross from a pure-bred male and ordinary females produces good results, but by using the grade male the results are disappointing. Inbreeding is another cause of failure, resulting in stunted offsprings and a loss of size and vitality. It is not necessary to keep a pure-bred flock to insure good results. If you have a mixed flock, secure a pure-bred male, of the variety you like best, and mate with eight or ten of your best hens; setting the eggs from this pen, you will have a good start the following year, and can kill off all the old stock; then by getting a pure-bred male occasionally, you will have a flock that will compare, for stock purposes, with the best in the country, at a very small outlay. In starting your flock it is necessary to consider the probable market you will have for your produce—both meat and eggs. If you have a local demand, ascertain whether light or dark-colored eggs are required, also the color of the legs and skin in dressed poultry. In England they like white legs and skin, while the demand in the States is for yellow skin and yellow legs. The time is near at hand when large quantities of dressed poultry and eggs will be exported from Manitoba and the Northwest, and those who have the right class of stock will find a paying market. Exporters will require eggs of good size and uniform in color

and shape; poultry well fattened, properly dressed, and uniform in color and size. England imports millions of dollars' worth of both eggs and poultry, and there is always a market for a first-class article. Canada to-day ranks high for cheese, and her butter shipments, under the present system, are sure to be a success, and there is nothing to prevent our eggs and poultry (shipped in similar cars) finding a paying market either in the large American cities or on the English market. The experimental farms have been trying various crosses of pure-bred poultry, and recommend White Leghorns and Light Brahmas, and Brown Leghorns and Partridge Cochins to produce eggs and carcass, but the Plymouth Rock and Wyandotte males crossed with ordinary stock will produce a bird that for general purposes cannot be beaten. In the Manitoba climate it is rather hard, under ordinary surroundings, to get early sitters; but, if possible, get a few early hatches. The pullets will lay early in the fall and continue through the winter, if properly housed, and be the first to sit in the spring. By selecting these early-hatched birds, your flock will in a short time moult early in the fall and lay when eggs command the highest prices. Early-hatched cockerels can be marketed in July and August, before the wild fowl come on the market. By killing the cockerels off at this early stage it makes more room for the stock you intend to keep over, and the cost of feeding the flock is considerably reduced.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

[In order to make this department as useful as possible, parties enclosing stamped envelopes will receive answers by mail, in cases where early replies appear to us advisable; all enquiries, when of general interest, will be published in next succeeding issue, if received at this office in sufficient time. Enquirers must in all cases attach their name and address in full, though not necessarily for publication.]

Legal.

RECOVERY OF MONEY—NO AGREEMENT.

A. W. B.:—"A, while under twenty-one years of age, being a Public school teacher, paid or lent about \$175 a year for two years to his father, with whom he resided during the time he was teaching, as previously. Nothing was said by either party as to whether A was to pay for his board or whether or not the moneys paid to the father were paid as for board or as a loan or gift. Can A now recover back from his father the moneys paid or any of them?"

[No. We think the moneys paid would be deemed to be paid as for board, etc.]

MONEY PAID UNDER MISTAKE.

M. J., Huron Co., Ont.:—"Last year I agreed to breed a mare to B's horse and to pay the money this last spring if the mare proved to be in foal; but before time for payment I sold the mare and B came in the spring and said the mare was in foal, and I paid him the money. I afterwards ascertained the mare was not in foal at all. Can I recover the money I paid to B?"

[Yes. If the money was really paid under a mistake or by reason of the false statement of C.]

PAYMENTS ON MORTGAGE.

A. R. G., Wellington Co., Ont.:—"To whom must payments on the mortgage be made where the mortgagee himself lives at a distance and desires payments sent direct to himself, although his agent lives near at hand?"

[The payments should be paid direct to the mortgagee unless he otherwise directs, and moneys paid to the agent after notice not to pay to him are made at the risk of the mortgagor.]

ABOUT PROVING WILLS.

WENTWORTH, Ont.:—"1. What is the object of proving or probating a will?"

[No person has power to collect debts and give valid receipts or is safe in managing an estate until the will is proved. It is the official means of showing that the will is the valid and last will of the testator.]

"2. Do all wills require to be proved?"

[Yes; sooner or later, if the estate is properly managed.]

"3. What is the cost; and is the cost always the same?"

[From, say, \$25 upwards; more in larger estates.]

"4. When must the will be proved?"

[It may be done at any length of time after the decease of the testator, and generally will require to be done at an early date.]

"5. Is there a penalty for not proving a will?"

[No.]

SALE OF LAND—INFANT INTERESTED.

M. E., Hastings Co., Ont.:—"I. A, by his will divided his farm to his wife (B) for life, and after her death to his son (C), and appointed executors. B and C both desire to sell, but C is not twenty-one years old. Can they and the executors sell and make a valid conveyance. Kindly explain?"

[A conveyance to be effective in conveying the interest of C would require to be approved of by the official guardian for infants, and he would require C's share of the purchase money to be under his