

What is Muck?

As to the question, what is muck and its value as a fertilizer? I will say facts are stubborn things, scientific gentlemen's opinions notwithstanding. There are as many different grades of muck as there are kinds of soils. For the poorest article, take a deposit made up of a cold spring or swampy place, with level surroundings, with a heavy growth of moss, and you have a bed of peat of the lowest vegetable organization and of very little value for any purpose. Or, if the surroundings are pine barrens and sandy, it will be but a grade higher; or washings from poor gravelly soils, and even from clayey soils, are a cheat and a snare.

True muck that is of value as an absorbent and fertilizer, in the first place requires a natural place for a deposit of considerable depth, with a stream flowing through and overflowing the surroundings, being hilly with a good soil and the timber hard wood. The overflow naturally leaves a deposit of leaves, sticks, vegetation and fine soil from the surrounding hills, and eventually forming a rich deposit of sterling value to the farmer, both for reclaiming and as an agent for mineral purposes.

I do not write from theory or a scientific standpoint, but from actual experience, having tested the value, and never found it to go back on me or others when used in an intelligent way. I would as soon have one load or cord of good muck thrown under my stock and composed of half muck and half manure, as the same quantity of pure manure.

I have planted corn and other crops on both standing side by side, and no one could detect any difference, only in potatoes, and that in favor of the muck being a better yield and nicer and smoother potatoes.

I could go on multiplying my experience and that of my neighbors, in favor of muck, but will come to a close before I become tiresome.—[Corr. Germantown Telegraph.]

Octagonal Barns.

If a barn is wanted to accommodate a certain number of animals, the proper space is better and more cheaply obtained in the octagonal form, for this gives an equal space in every direction, and requires the least outside wall. It would require a 66-foot octagon to accommodate 40 head of cattle and give six box stalls (9 x 10 feet), with plenty of room for calves besides. This form of barn might also be enlarged by building on a wing when wanted. Four wings would look well on such a barn, and might be built wide enough for two rows of cattle. On a larger octagonal center, eight wings might be built, increasing the room to almost any extent. On the size above given, two wings, in the direction to extend the feeding floor, and the rows of cattle in the octagon, might be built without injuring the appearance of the barn—the octagonal centre relieving the long line by the appearance of an elevated dome. And when wanted, two more wings could be added, still improving its appearance. This form of barn is certainly the most convenient, and is least expensive according to space enclosed. The octagon gives a wider space, which can be laid out more conveniently than in a long narrow barn, and all parts being equi-distant from a centre, such a barn requires less travel in doing the daily work.

Cotton Seed Meal Experiments.

A correspondent of the N. E. Farmer reports a trial of cotton seed meal, which shows what it will sometimes do for cows that are in milk. He was feeding and milking fifteen cows, with a weekly product of seventy pounds of butter. The feed was the usual hay and coarse fodder of the farm, with corn and cob meal, ground with oats. Two quarts of cotton seed meal were given, in place of the same value of the corn and oats, with an increase of the butter yield to ninety pounds per week.

This farmer has been thoroughly converted to the use of cotton seed, in connection with other grain and fodder, for butter cows. His neighbors are also beginning to experiment with it, for the same purpose. We are not prepared to accept the inference that might be drawn from the above single experiment, as conclusive evidence that cotton seed meal is of so much greater value, according to its cost, than the corn and oat provender used in the beginning of the experiment. Experiments of this kind must be repeated many times, and under such conditions as will enable one to feel very positive that the results are due solely to the cotton seed, and to nothing else.

Meadow Fescue.

We have had this engraving made to bring before your attention in a more prominent manner this most valuable grass, the real merits of which are as yet known to but very few in Canada. From various reports that we have seen and from conversation with the Hon. Harris Lewis, who has had practical experience with it for many years, and considering him a person of the highest honor and probably the best authority, we feel satisfied that this is one of the best grasses that we can recommend to you. This grass is as hardy as our June grass; will grow in any part of Ontario, where any grass will grow, and where most kinds will not grow. It will stand drouth excellently well, as it sends its roots to an extreme depth, 12 feet deep. It makes hay nearly, or quite, as good as Timothy; if you can get a good after growth from it, which makes it superior to Timothy, as Timothy will not yield an after



growth. It is also claimed to be equal to Red Clover as a fertilizer. We wish our readers to be the first and leading farmers in their localities. We feel safe in recommending this grass to you, as we have not variety of grasses enough in our pastures or on our farms. If you have not tried this or seen it growing yet, get a small quantity this year, and should it not be even a ½ lb., by sowing more of this grass you will enrich your land, improve your stock and fill your pockets. It will grow on poor land where most grasses will die; it will thrive on rich and it will succeed on clay or sandy soil. It is relished by stock of all kinds, and can be sown either in the spring or fall. One bushel, or 24 lbs. is sufficient for one acre when sown clean. But the greatest advantages in our opinion will be in its value as a prominent pasture grass to mix with other grasses. Mr. Romeo Stephens, on his Jersey stock farm at St. Lambert, P. Q., sowed some eight years ago, in conjunction with other grasses, and it was thriving well last summer.

Clover.

N. Griffin, at the Elmira Farmers' Club, said: "There is no substitute for clover, so far as I know—nothing to take its place. It is better in its effect on land than any other forage plant. It is said that a good crop of clover—say such a crop as will yield two tons of cured hay from an acre—will leave an equal weight of roots for the soil. This is like a coat of manure. I am sorry to hear that clover is falling into disrepute, for its renovating power is greater than that of any other plant. Lately clover does better than in a few years past, so I hope we shall soon have the old measure of success. Many years ago the farms of Dutchess county used to give large crops of timothy and they were taken away and sold. The farms are now exhausted—ruined because the crops were taken off. But clover is never taken off when the roots are left. Forty-five years ago a great deal of timothy was raised in Tompkins county and the land that produced it ran down under its production and they had to turn their attention to clover. At first it was difficult to get it established, but little by little under its influence the land grew better. Farmers had to ditch their lands as the first condition, then they used plaster, and at last got full crops of clover and better crops of grain, for their land improved through clover. Hungarian grass has been tried, but, like timothy, when the crop is taken off, nothing is left and the soil becomes poor. The best crop is that which leaves most to the soil, and that is what clover does."

Charcoal on Land.

The absorptive power of charcoal is well known in the arts. Its capacity in this direction is remarkable. Accurate experiment has proved that in twenty-four hours it would absorb ninety times its own volume of ammoniacal gas, eighty-five times its volume of muriatic acid gas, and sixty-five times its volume of sulphurous acid gas. It is this remarkable quality that makes it so valuable in destroying odor, color, taste in many substances, and preserving meats, vegetables and fruits from rapid decay. Its use as a filter in cisterns is well known, and its value here depends upon the same quality. It separates and appropriates to itself the decaying matter and other impurities in water, rendering it pure and sweet. If placed on the surface of the soil, it will gather from the air moisture and gases and impart them to the growing plants. On the same principle its value in the barnyard, stable and hog pens, as an absorptive agent, is incalculable. When used for this purpose to form the basis of manure, it should be in the powdered state.

Red Rust in Wheat.

In a former number of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, we advised, as proved by our own experience, the steeping of Seed Wheat in strong brine and drying it by quick lime. On this subject Mr. R. A. Perkins, of the Experimental Farm of Melleont, Queensland, read a paper on Red Rust, from which we take the following extract:—

This fearful pest first made its appearance in this colony about the year 1853 or 1854. Many will remember the year 1854 to their cost. Since then it has been more or less prevalent, and much valuable time and expense has been vested in experiments and researches to try and find an antidote for red rust, but none of those tried have proved a sure remedy, although some are of great value.

First—It has been proved that soft fluffy-strawed wheats are the most susceptible to red rust, so it behooves every farmer to sow none but what will grow a strong glossy straw.

Second—Manure and Pickle. I have tried a great number of different sorts of pickle, and the best results have been obtained from salt and lime, and the worst from bluestone. I consider that we require a stimulating pickle, of which I find lime and salt far the best. Glue and charcoal, saltpetre, sulphate of soda, and many chemical mixtures, have been tried with varying results, but none have proved of any permanent value except salt and lime.

Salicylic acid is a substance used of late years to a great extent in preserving fruits, vegetables, and meat. It is a perfect preservative, but the trouble is that it acts prejudicially on the constitutions of the people who consume it. Among other effects, it produces deafness. In France the use of it in articles which are for sale has been prohibited.