Earn a Farm Library

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Do you want to increase your library? Would you like any of these books? Glance over the following titles:—

Green's Vegetable Gardening.
The Practical Garden Book.
Beautiful Flower Growing.
Evergreens, and How to Grow Them.
Farm Windbreaks and Shelter Belts.
Landscape Gardening.
Amateur Fruit Growing.
The New Onion Culture.
The New Rhubarb Culture.

We intend publishing a Special Garden Number of The Guide early in February next. In order to make this number as practical as possible we want to publish the actual experiences of farmers in this country who have made a success already of gardening and all the operations connected therewith. We recognize that such experience is valuable, and as such we offer the complete library mentioned above for the best article received on each of the following subjects; for the second best article on each subject we will give any six of these books, and for the third best article, any three of these books. The subjects are as follows:—

SUBJECT No. 1—THE VALUE OF A FARM GARDEN

All contributions on this subject should contain complete instruction as to the method which has been followed in making a satisfactory farm garden. The following outline will give some idea of the points which should be touched on:—

Size and plan of lay-out. Kind of soil.
Variety of vegetables which are most useful and suitable for Western conditions.
Amount and kind of artilizer applied.
Method of preparing the ground for the different crops.
Time and method of sowing each variety.
Distance apart of the rows
Possibilities of and methods followed in the production of home-grown seeds.

This should include the most common vegetables grown in the West, such as:—

Beans.	Lettuce.	Radishes.
Beets.	Onions.	Citrons.
Cabbage.	Parsley.	Squash.
Carrots.	Parsnips.	Turnips.
Cauliflower.	Peas.	Rhubarb.
Celery.	Pumpkins.	

SUBJECT No. 2—EXPERIENCE WITH SMALL FRUITS

This article should deal with all the details which are necessary to ensure successful cultivation of some or all of the following:—

Bush Fruits
Gooseberries Strawberries Raspberries Currants
Tree Fruits
Plums Cherries Apples

Discuss the yield and market price, giving some idea as to whether any of these crops are profitable ones to grow.

SUBJECT No. 3—SPECIAL GARDEN CROPS

Articles on this subject should deal with the growing and marketing of special garden crops, such as:—

Celery.	Onions.
Cucumbers.	Sweet Corn.
Tomatoes.	Beans.
Rhubarb.	Cabbage.

Most of these crops require forcing, so that a description and, if possible, a plan of a hot bed should be included in the article. Discuss the yield and market price of each of these crops, and tell whether each crop is a profitable one to grow. We are especially desirous of receiving information in regard to the marketing end of the business. Information bearing on this phase of the subject will go a long way towards determining the best contribution.

SUBJECT No. 4—THE VALUE OF WINDBREAKS

Every garden to be successful should be protected in the West by a windbreak. We want articles explaining how a good windbreak can be grown on the prairie farms. Following are some of the points to be dealt with:—

Preparation of land for windbreaks.
Best position of windbreaks for protection purposes.
Kind of trees best suited to prairie conditions.
Method of planting trees, distance apart, subsequent attention which these trees require, etc.

SUBJECT No. 5—FARMSTEAD PLANNING

The value of a farm is very often judged by the appearance of the house and buildings. We want you to tell us what you have done on your farm towards laying out the grounds attractively. It should include:—

A plan of the homestead.
Kinds of trees planted around, together with the best time and method of planting them.
Arrangement of flower beds, vines, creepers, shade trees, etc.
Shrubs, evergreens, etc., used.

TO CONTRIBUTORS

We want articles from every Province and from all parts of each Province. When writing on any of the subjects, just think that you are telling a neighbor who has had no experience in the matter under discussion just exactly how to be successful along whatever line of work you are describing. For instance, if you are going to describe your gardening experiences, just consider that you are giving instructions to someone who has never made a garden before. Describe the whole subject in detail just as if you were telling the hired man what was to be done. In this way your article will be of real practical value to all who read it. Photographs should accompany the articles if any are available. Write plainly on one side of paper only. All articles must be received by January 22, 1915. The result of the competition will be published in the Special Number. Address all contributions to:—

AGRICULTURAL EDITOR
GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE, WINNIPEG

Field Crops

DRY FARMING HINTS

Some very excellent work is being done by the Departments of Agriculture of the various provinces with the object in view of improving farm conditions thruout Canada. Saskatchewan is very much to the fore in this line of work and just now large posters are being sent out, which may be put up in prominent places thruout the country, giving the rules to observe and the precautions to take in growing profitable crops in the drier portions of the province. The poster practically embodies the creed of the dry farmer, and as such its reproduction here should prove valuable to readers in many parts of the West.

The first requirement is more appropriate now than ever before in view of the fact that farmers are being urged promiscously to grow wheat, wheat, and more wheat. The way to obtain maximum yields every year without the risk of a crop failure is, first, to determine to put more and better work on fewer acres rather than do little work onto the surface of so many acres

The Summerfallow

Then regard the summerfallow as being the root of the matter. Without summerfallow all is uncertainty and crops are at the mercy of the weather from week to week. With the summerfallow there is reasonable security that, apart from hail, a crop will be harvested every year. Summerfallow at least one-third of your cultivated land each year, and thereby secure peace of mind. If no crops are sown in the drier areas except on properly prepared summerfallow, breaking and second crop thereafter, general crop failure will be unknown and more grain will be actually harvested one year with another. Regard the storing up of moisture in the soil as being the chief purpose of the summerfallow, and so that this purpose may be fulfilled, observe these eight rules.

Land that is to be summerfallowed should be plowed shallow the fall before if it contains native creeping rooted grasses (quack, sweet, couch grass, etc.), and other perennials, as so much of the newer land does. Shallow plowing in a dry time will check these perennials and insure the germination of weed seeds and shelled grain in the early spring before the real plowing of the fallow is begun. If time does not permit of, or the condition of the land does not warrant light fall plowing, double disc land that is to be fallowed, preferably in the fall or else in the spring before plowing.

Plow the summerfallow early. Begin to plow as soon as the crop is sown, or as soon after that as the land has been disced if it has not previously been lightly plowed or disced as recommended in rules 5 and 6. Do not delay starting the plow until weed seeds covered by spring discing have germinated. This germination might be dependent upon rains that may not come for a month. Best results can only come from early plowing. Plow the summerfallow deeply. This refers to the main plowing in the early summer, not to the fall plowing. Plow deeper each time, as power permits, until a depth of at least six or eight inches is reached.

Harrow the summerfallow (and every other field you plow) immediately after the plow or at the same operation, no matter when the plowing is done. This applies to nearly all plowing except sod land. Evaporation of moisture starts immediately land, even dry land, is plowed. Evaporation can only be checked by a soil mulch—a loose layer of dry soil on the surface of the land—and harrowing is the quickest and cheapest way of getting such a condition. Use a packer if you have one. If you haven't got one, don't buy one on credit, but, instead, make still more use of the harrow.

Aim to complete the plowing and working down of the summerfallow before June 20.

Don't start breaking until the summerfallow is all plowed and worked down. It is better to properly and sufficiently cultivate the land already broken than to neglect it and break more to be neglected in its turn.

Keep the summerfallow black and free from crust thruout the growing season by the timely use of the harrow on it. Always harrow with one or more of three objects in view: either to work the land down and create a mulch, or to destroy young weeds, or to restore a mulch (granular condition of the surface soil).

"FAIRVIEW AGAIN"
By "Scotch Thistle"; first at Winnipeg, 1914. Bred and owned by J. G. Barron, Carberry.

Concerning Spring Work

First thing in the spring harrow all the land you are going to sow, except land that you are afraid will drift. This will help it to "warm up," will conserve moisture, enable you to get on to it sooner with the drill and do better work.

Use the cleanest and best seed you can get, and clean it some more after you get it, if it isn't already quite clean and a uniform sample.

Treat all your seed with formalin or in the case of wheat with bluestone, if you prefer. The only excuse for loss of yields and grades from smut is carelessness. Smut of wheat, oats and barley is entirely preventable, and the wilt of flax can largely be controlled by formalin, thanks to science and experiment.

Don't overload your land with seed. Thin seeding is drought resistant. The less moisture is in a field the less seed it should have because the fewer plants it can support and bring to maturity. The best rates of seeding for all areas in south-western and central western Saskatchewan, not subject to harvest frosts, are approximately as follows:

On new land or summerfallow sow wheat one to one and a half bushels to acre; oats, one and a quarter to one and three-quarter bushels to acre; barley, one and a half bushels to acre; flax, twenty to thirty pounds to acre. Second crop on new land or after fallow sow three pecks of wheat per acre, one bushel of oats per acre, one bushel of barley per acre and one peck of flax per acre.

Thick seeding promotes early maturity, but thin seeding in the absence of fall frosts gives larger returns, and is, therefore, good dry-farming practice. Don't accept the fallacy that thick seeding conserves moisture, because more plants are provided and the ground is shaded. Everyone recognizes that the thinner the vegetation is permitted to grow on the summerfallow the more moisture is conserved. The opposite is equally true; the thicker the vegetation is made to grow by overseeding the more quickly the moisture content of the soil is exhausted.

Put the seed down into the moisture, and not merely to it, even tho this puts the seed deeper than you have been accustomed to in more humid lands. In any case, put the seed in at least 2½ inches. You will thus insure more uniform and immediate germination.

Harrow after the drill on every field you sow. Regard harrowing after the drill and after the plow as part of the operations of plowing and drilling.

When you think a field has been sufficiently harrowed go over it once or twice more. The extra strokes are the easiest way to make sure of extra bushels.

When grain is up a day or two, with straight upright blades, on some field in good tilth, experiment on two or three acres by giving it a lengthwise stroke of the ordinary drag harrow (light or lever preferred) to eradicate weeds and renew the soil mulch. Then watch and study results. You can't be sure of crops in dry lands except by putting plenty of intelligent and timely work on every acre. These methods are intended for farmers on the clay and clay loam lands of the districts mentioned, having retentive subsoil.

REDUCED RATES ON SEED GRAIN

It is announced that, following negotiations between the railway companies, the Grain Growers' Associations and the provincial departments of agriculture, reduced freight rates on seed grain will be in force in the prairie provinces from January 15 to June 15, 1915.

Purchasers of seed grain, whether in carload or less than carload lots, in order to secure the advantage of the special rates must secure from the secretary of their nearest local Grain Growers' Association or U.F.A. a certificate that they are bona fide farmers and are entitled to the advantage of the rates. This certificate must then be countersigned by the Central Secretary of the Association, J. B. Musselman, Moose Jaw, for Saskatchewan, R. McKenzie, Winnipeg, for Manitoba, and P. P. Woodbridge, Calgary, for Alberta, and forwarded to the shipper of the grain to be attached to the bill of lading at time and point of shipment.

The countersigned certificate and that alone will be the receiving agent's authority for collecting charges according to the reduced rates for seed grain instead of according to the regular tariff for grain shipments, so purchasers of seed grain are advised to provide themselves in every case and in good time with the necessary certificate.

SEED TESTING AT CALGARY

During the month of November the record number of 444 samples was received at the Calgary Seed Laboratory as against 161 for the same period last year. Farmers sent 257 of this number and seed merchants 187. Of these samples 386 were tested for germination, 138 for purity. In the purity tests, of the 50 samples of oats received 48 were found to require labels indicating the noxious weed seeds present, also 5 of the 14 wheats, 5 of the 7 barleys and all 4 of the white clover samples. In timothy, red clover, alsike and alfalfa 8 samples graded No. 1, 14 No. 2, 17 No. 3 and 15 were rejected. With the reports sent out from the laboratory indicating the weed seeds present, information is frequently given for the recleaning. This regular routine, together with investigation work, has necessitated an increase in the Calgary staff. Germination tests were not complete on receipt of the monthly report, but of 73 samples from Saskatchewan tested at the Ottawa Seed Laboratory 18 were over 95 per cent. 41 above and 14 below 63 per cent., with an average of 80 per cent. Saskatchewan oats tested at Ottawa last year gave an average germination of 91.4 per cent. for the season.