

The Illustrated JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE

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THE ILLUSTRATED

Journal of Agriculture.

Montreal, March 1, 1897.

The Farm.

SUPPLEMENTAL CATCH CROPS.

To be forewarned is to be forearmed—
Certainty of poor grass this summer—Turnips, &c.—Fodder-crops Grain and pulse—Clovers—Rye—Maize, &c.—Not to graze meadows.

The advantage of planting forage crops, to supplement our pastures and meadows, cannot be too strongly or too frequently insisted upon. The peculiar state of the weather during the early part of this winter will make the practice the more necessary, the land remained until lately without its usual protective covering of snow, and the grass lands, especially where they have been closely grazed, must have suffered from exposure to the severe cold which occasionally prevailed: alternate freezing and thawing is a more destructive condition than long continued frost. (1) Short grass crops will necessarily be the result, and consequently a lack of sufficient forage for next Fall and winters supply. It is fortunate that we have the means within our power of overcoming this difficulty in a great measure, namely by planting some extra catch crops. We might also, in view of the situation, increase the area of our root crop. White turnips grow very quickly and certainly in friable, well filled soils, and yield 6 per cent of albuminoids, so that they are by no means deficient in nutritive quality. Yellow Aberdeen and Tankards grow rapidly, keep longer, and are a little more nutritious.

These will be found very useful for stock in the late Summer, Fall, and early winter, while swedes, mangels, and carrots give us a good supply throughout the winter.

But now let us turn our attention more particularly to what are usually called green fodder crops, to be consumed either in a partially ripe state or made into hay—not ripened for seed—of those the following are the most important. Vetches, being of slow growth at first should be sown early and on a piece of well enriched land, and if a few oats are scattered amongst them, they will give a most valuable forage; cut a small portion of daily and feed to the stock, which will thrive on it famously, especially horses when busily working at the harvest. Field peas with a mixture of oats, barley or rye, also make an excellent forage crop to be cut and fed in a green state, while what have not been thus consumed can be cut just as the peas begin to harden

(1) Roll as soon as the frost is out of the ground and the land is not quite dry.—Ed.

In the pod, and cured as hay. It will however be necessary to take care that the haulms are well cured and quite free from moisture when stored, and a perfect dry place for storage should be chosen, otherwise they will mould quickly and will be useless as fodder. Clover not only improves poor land, by its wonderful property of accumulating nitrogen, but gives two and even three cuttings of excellent feed. The importance of growing clover in good quantity is sadly overlooked. All the leguminous plants, vetches, peas, beans, lucerne, sainfoin, the clovers, are all of the greatest consequence in the economic management of the farm.

Lucerne, or Alfalfa, is a valuable forage plant in localities where it will grow, the roots are perennial, and after the plants are well established it will give several crops during the year.

The cereal or grain crops can be made useful for forage purposes. Rye, if sown early, will give a good quantity of useful feed in the autumn, and the following spring it can be used when quite young, green, or if cut before its grain is ripe, and cured, will make dry forage, not much inferior to Timothy hay. (1) Barley and oats may be used in the same manner, except that they must be sown in the spring. Every farmer should notice and study which of those will best suit his soil and locality, and not sit idly down and miss his opportunity of growing stuff wherewith to feed his stock in a scarce season, instead of having to buy food for them or let them starve as some improvident and cruel ones have been known to do.

Indian corn is very useful as a forage crop, though there are some who have a prejudice against it, for the want of knowledge and experience, for the different kinds of ensilage corn can be grown in any part of the Province of Quebec. I saw some patches on the Gaspé coast last Autumn which, notwithstanding the shortness of their season, was fully grown and sufficiently matured for forage. The prejudice in the minds of some is no doubt caused by their not paying due attention to the cultivation of Indian corn.

Forgetting that it is a large-growing tropical plant, they sow it broadcast thickly and then it is not much better for fodder than reeds or rushes. Now, if it is to yield a satisfactory crop, it must be planted at such a distance apart as to allow each plant to get all the air, sunlight and moisture it requires for its proper development, and then it will produce an abundance of rich luxuriant leaves, succulent stems, and nutritious ears. Even if no ensilage is made, this will be found an excellent crop to cut and feed out to the cattle as soon as the pastures begin to fall and throughout the Autumn; by its use we can keep our cows thriving and milking well and in good condition to go into their winter quarters, and although its nutritive ratio is not so great as other crops, the abundance which will be produced on an acre of properly cultivated corn will compensate for this. I remember sometime since seeing an anecdote which is so appropriate to this subject that I intend to quote it although it may be "A chestnut" to some.

A farmer's son, who was not very industrious, conceived the idea that preaching would be easier than farming. There was a conference of the Presbyterian Church being held, so the young man went to the conference leader and told him he thought he had had a call to

(1) Doubtful.—Ed.

the ministry and sought his advice. The leader being rather doubtful of his real motives, asked him how he knew this? He replied after a little hesitation, that he had dreamed that he saw a large ring of fire in the sky in the centre of which were the letters "P. C." he said he construed this to mean: Presbyterian Conference; hence his visit. The leader knowing his proclivities replied: "My dear young man, you never made a greater mistake, those letters meant "Plant Corn". I have thought often that if some of our careless indifferent to their own interest, or prejudiced farmers could have the "P.C." vision and interpret it as did the Presbyterian Divine at a time like this, when scarcity threatens them, it would be a blessing to themselves and to the poor dumb animals in their care if they regarded the admonition.

P. S.—Another great advantage of having an abundance of forage during a scarce season is that it will save us the temptation of turning out our stock to graze our meadows after mowing; a most pernicious practice, especially in this climate, where the protection of the aftermath for the roots of the grass in winter is of such great importance.

GEORGE MOORE.

Then, how do the closely mown lawns in Sherbrooke street, Montreal, retain their verdure? Never graze timothy, on account of its bulbous habit of growth, but as to other grasses, clovers, etc., we do not think feeding them off in the fall is likely to do much harm. Orchard grass certainly does not suffer by it.—Ed.

IN COMPETITION—MONTREAL EXHIBITION.

First prize, Exhibition, Montreal, 1896.

ON THE BEST METHOD FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF WEEDS.

The weeds of this Province are chiefly Wild vetches, Wild mustard, Wild Buckwheat, Nettles, Barngrass, Burdocks, Thistles and Daisies. These being the best known, I will confine myself to their consideration.

I advance upon the theory that the reason that weeds continue upon the land, is because they are allowed to seed. That the seed is ploughed into, or otherwise buried in the soil. That near the top of the ground the seeds grow. That underneath that certain depth, they germinate, but so feebly, that they cannot take root. Underneath that again they decay. But at a certain depth, they remain preserved intact, and ready for their duties, when brought sufficiently near the surface; these different results being caused by the different amounts of air, heat, etc., coming into contact with the seeds, at the different depths.

Every farmer of experience has seen a meadow clean of weeds, which when ploughed, was soon covered with a thick mass of nettles, barngrass, and other weeds, the only explanation being, that these being of early maturity, dropped their seeds before the field was harvested, the next ploughing buried the seed, deep in the ground, and the last ploughing brought them to the surface. Thus, if I am right? all the weeds would soon be destroyed if they were not allowed to seed. All the weeds I have mentioned except Burdock and weeds of that kind require the same treatment as the Daisy. I will treat of it, and that will include