

FARMERS' COLUMN.

NOTRITIVE VALUE OF CORN.—The following interesting talk on Indian corn is from the Boston Journal of Chemistry: The prejudice existing against the use of maize as an article of human food, among certain classes of people is surprising, and this prejudice is based on ignorance. Our corn is seldom found in Irish or English kitchens, although millions of bushels are exported to England every year. The people there are strangers to those New England luxuries, corn bread and pudding, and we suppose it will be a long time before they will know anything of them. Indian corn is one of the most important and healthful articles of human food that a beneficent Providence has bestowed upon men; and to its high nutritive value is due in a large degree the strength and vigour of the race of men who laid the foundation of this great republic. It was much more largely used fifty or one hundred years ago than now, as fine wheat flour, for some not well founded reason, has usurped its place in bread making. In the several forms, however, of hulled corn, popped corn, hominb samp, corn starch, malzenta, etc., vast quantities are consumed by all classes of people. Meal from Indian corn contains more than four times as much oleaginous matter as wheat flour, more starch, and nearly as much nitrogenous material; consequently in all cold climates it is abundantly adapted to sustain the system by furnishing heat forming compounds. The oil gives warmth, the nitrogenous principle gives muscular strength. The combinations of alimentary compounds in Indian corn renders it alone the mixed diet capable of sustaining man under the most extraordinary circumstances. It holds the elementary principles which constitute the basis of organic life. In this particular it is more remarkable than any other vegetable production known to man. There is a large number of dishes of which corn meal forms the basis which are exceedingly palatable. What, for instance, is more delicious than cold corn pudding, cut in slices and fried in sweet butter and lard? Hot corn-cakes when properly and skillfully made, are almost universally regarded as a luxury, and Boston brown bread is famous everywhere in the country. The reason why corn meal is not more largely used at the present time is that it is quite difficult to obtain it of dealers and grocers in a perfectly pure and sweet taste. Millers grind the corn as it comes from the West, mixed with portions of the cob and saturated with dust and dirt, and this is sold for kitchen as well as stable use. Much of the western corn is damaged in transportation, and this is ground up with that which is sound. If good sweet northern corn is properly ground in an old-fashioned stone mill, after being winnowed to free it from dust, a meal will result of a rich golden color, and no dish can be prepared from it which will not be palatable, and most nutritious. In our family we use the Lake-side grown corn, selected for domestic use, pass it after it is shelled through a winnowing machine, and have it ground between millstones which have been revolving for probably half a century. In this way we secure meal in its highest perfection, and this is what ought to be accessible to all families. In trials at the farm test the comparative value of meal from home-grown corn, and that for commercial sources, when fed to cows and other animals, we have learned the nutritive value of the former is nearly double that of the latter, and this practical result confirms analytical results. The difference between the specimens from the two sources is most surprising. Farmers who are so foolish as to go to the market to purchase corn and meal for their animals should understand the great difference in nutritive value between what they can raise and what they purchase.

HINTS ON POULTRY KEEPING.—In keeping fowls healthy, we have found nothing equal to onions chopped fine and thoroughly mixed with meal or meal and mill-feed. They eat it readily. In the incipient stages of most of their common diseases, including cholera, we have always found this, an effectual remedy. As sulphur enters largely into the formation of the feathers, it should be frequently fed to them. In winter, or when confined, hens, to lay well, must have meal often, or pounded bones, the fresher the better, or oyster shells. If fed with these plentifully, with such variety of grain as they like best, and well housed and watered, they will lay nearly as well in winter as in summer, and will seldom ever eat their own eggs.

How TO APPLY MANURE.—When course manure is applied to a crop, it decomposes very slowly and we fail to get the whole benefit of it for the first crop and may lose some of its value. But when it is made completely available before it is applied, the first crop is enabled to appropriate all that it wants and the surplus remains for the next crop. To get the greatest benefit from it, therefore, manure for shallow-rooted plants, such as wheat, oats, etc., should be applied near the surface and mixed with the soil by harrowing, just before the seed is sown, so that the young plant can reach its food when it will do it the most good. For deep rooted grass feeding plants, as the various roots, potatoes, etc., the manure should be covered with a light furrow in the drill, and a steel extra fine fertilizer be placed near the seed.—American Agriculturist.

ASHES AND IRON FOR FLOWERS.—The observation of practical and experimental gardeners seems to confirm the fact that, to procure brilliant colors in flowers, it is necessary to supply the soil with an abundance of ferruginous constituents and silica. The latter supplies a material (says S. E. Todd in one of his foreign exchanges) which is of vast importance to the production of that brilliancy of the petals and the dark grass luster of the leaves. That, if potash be added, or the ground be dressed round about the growing flowers with unleached wood ashes, an increased brilliancy will appear in every petal and leaf. Any person who cultivates only a few flowers in pots, or on grassy lawns, or on spacious parterres, may readily satisfy himself of the exceedingly useful part the foregoing materials play in the production of beautiful flowers. Even white flowers, or roses that have petals nearly white, will be greatly improved in brilliancy by providing iron, sand and unleached ashes for the roots of growing plants. Ferruginous material may be applied to the soil when flowers are growing, or where they are to grow, by procuring a supply of oxide of iron, in the form of the dark-colored scales that fall from the heated bars of iron when the metal is hammered by the blacksmiths. Iron turnings and iron filings, which may be obtained for a trifle at most machine shops, should be worked into the soil near flowers; and in a few years it will be perceived that all the minute fragments will have been dissolved, thus furnishing the choicest material for painting the gayest colors of the flower garden. When there is an excess of vegetable mould in the flower bed, and a deficiency of silica or sand, the flower will never be so rich in color, not so brilliant, as they would be were a liberal dressing of sand, or sandy loam, worked down into the bed, where the growing roots could reach it. If wood ashes can be obtained readily, let a dressing be spread over the surface of the ground about half an inch deep, and raked in. A dressing of quicklime will be found excellent for flowers of every description. It is also of eminent importance to improve the fertility of the soil where flowers are growing, in order to have mature, plump, ripe seed. Let the foregoing materials be spread around the flower, and raked in at any convenient period of the year. When soil is prepared for flowers in pots, let some sand, some oxide of iron and ashes, be mingled thoroughly with the leaf mould.

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