

chosen, the more sheltered the better, on which to build a shed of sufficient dimensions. A bed four feet wide, and twelve feet long, will give an ample supply for a moderate-sized family. The shed may, however, be erected ten feet wide and sixteen feet long, giving space for working materials, and two beds if required. The shed should run from north to south, having a close roof, and weather-boarded. With the exception of four apertures as windows, to be covered with shutters, this erection might be made ornamental, having a portion of it for a tool-house. Having marked out the space for the bed, throw out the earth about six inches deep, laying it regularly at the side, and if good, it will do for earthing the bed. In the trench, lay four inches of good dung, not too short, for forming the bottom of the bed; then lay on the prepared dung about six inches thick, regularly over the surface, beating it down firmly with the back of the fork. Put on other six inches, and so on till eighteen or twenty-four inches thick. In that state it may remain ten or fifteen days, during which time the heat should be examined about the middle of the bed, by thrusting a small stick in several places, and when found of a very mild heat, the bed may be spawned. The spawn bricks for this purpose should be broken regularly into pieces about an inch and a half or two inches square. These pieces are best put in with the hand, raising the dung up a few inches with the one, while with the other the spawn can be laid in and covered. This ought to be done in every six inches of the surface of the bed. If the sides of the bed are made of a sloping form, they can also be spawned. After spawning, level the surface with the back of the spade, beating it gently, after which it may be earthed. Procure that of a sandy, loamy nature, if from a pasture, so much the better. Break it up and make it fine, laying it on two inches thick. Level it very neatly with the rake, and beat it closely and evenly. When the whole is finished, the bed must be covered a foot thick with good clean straw or natural hay, over which lay mats or canvas in severe weather. Examine the bed every few days, and if the heat increases, diminish the covering of straw, which is better than to take it off altogether. In about five weeks, if the bed be under proper cultivation, Mushrooms will make their appearance, and in two days more they will have grown to a sufficient size for use. Some people cut them, but it is decidedly better to give them a gentle twist in the

ground and draw them out, filling up the cavity with a little fine mould, gently pressed in level with the bed. This method of gathering is much better than *cutting*, as the part left generally rots and breeds insects, particularly the wood-louse, which is very destructive to Mushroom beds.

Sometimes it happens that a bed suddenly ceases to be productive. This may arise from various causes, but most frequently from the cold state of the bed in Winter, or a dryness of soil. In the former case, an additional covering should be given, in the latter, water in a milk-warm or tepid state should be applied moderately, for two or three mornings in succession. After each watering leave the covering off for about an hour. Soft water should be used for the purpose. In Summer the beds will require watering every two days, though in Winter they may not need it in as many months. A good bed will be productive for three months, though it may occasionally happen to wear out in half that time.

From these observations, an ingenious mind can make a Mushroom bed in a multitude of situations, all obtainable where there are cellars, stables, or other buildings. We would not despair even in the open air during Winter, covered with plenty of litter, under a few boards to ward off cold rains. In Spring and Summer, any quantity may be grown in this way.

It will be observed, in the cultivation of every other vegetable, we either sow or plant some evident material of reproduction; but in the cultivation of Mushrooms, we neither sow nor plant any antecedent production of seed, plant, or root, yet it is certain that Mushrooms are reproduced by a process in which the dung of certain animals forms the chief instrument, and on the goodness and strength of that ingredient, in whatsoever way it is made, chiefly depends the crop. We are aware that this vegetable appears in certain situations without any apparent cause, though we feel fully satisfied that there are inert ingredients that only require a combination of influences to produce certain results, and these results in nature are unerring.

The young Horticulturist should never desist from making moderate and well-considered experiments. Let him never suppose that perfection has already been attained. Acumen and perseverance should be pre-eminently conspicuous in the gardener, who has many vicissitudes by weather, insects, and accidents to encounter, and he should be prepared with resources to resist them all.