



The Home Truck Garden

In preparing and planting the garden can be found one of those instances where it pays to be on time. The planting of onions and the sowing of lettuce, beets, peas, &c., can be done about as early as it is possible to work the ground, though one may be anticipating some rather severe cold to follow. Some vegetables will usually come uninjured through quite a freeze when one is sure to have an abundance of garden stuff weeks before those who are in the habit of late planting.

To produce results, the garden must from the first be put and kept in ideal condition. It should have naturally a deep, loose, and sufficient, drained soil, which should at the first working be thoroughly and deeply turned. It must contain abundant organic matter, which can generally be supplied conveniently in the shape of well rotted barnyard manure which will also afford available plant food. Many make the mistake of waiting the planting season before applying such fertilizer, when if the plant food becomes at all available before the plants are matured it is only in part. Have no fear of making the garden too rich if the manure is given as a top-dressing during winter. In fact, the plants must be kept continually on the jump with heavy applications of fertilizer and proper cultivation. There is no other method whereby vegetables can be produced crisp and tender while at the same time highly productive. Heavily fertilized and properly treated soil will aid in forcing the plants to an early and vigorous maturity and prevent attacks from the late appearing insects.

Good farmers invariably follow the practice of crop rotation and good garden management should include the same wise system. A good rule is to sow surface growing plants this season where last year those having the nature of root growth grew. Again, while it was once customary to sow such seed as lettuce and radish every week or ten days, a better plan is to plant another row no sooner than the preceding one shows above ground. The reason for preferring to have no fixed dates upon which to plant is based upon the fact that the time required for the plants to appear varies according to the condition of the atmosphere and soil for germinating and starting the seed.

Value of Lucerne

The great value of lucerne as a rich succulent, tender fodder plant, and the need for its extended cultivation cannot be too strongly impressed upon every farmer. It requires a deep, friable, penetrable soil, free from stagnant water and well drained, in which the roots will search for moisture and plant food at greater depths. The land should be previously limed, and there is a good deal of truth in the saying: "No lime, no lucerne." Rich, friable, loamy soils, with a good percentage of sand are favourable to sturdy growth. A well-tilled soil and a good depth, free from weeds and fairly moist is needed to give the young plants a good start. The seed bed should be well fertilized with a leguminous crop ploughed in as green manure. Farm yard manure is an excellent stimulant to growth, although it possesses the tendency to introduce troublesome weeds. The surface must be fine to give the young plants a good start. From 15 to 20 lbs. of good clean seed may be sown deep by drill and 20 lbs. broadcast. It is of the utmost importance that the seed shall be healthy and free from dodder. So long as there is sufficient moisture the prevailing high temperatures will be in its favour. Where the soil is deficient in lime this can be rectified by a dressing of lime or superphosphate. To sum up heavy spring crops or fodder depend upon well drained and rich friable soil of good depth, thoroughly drained, heavily manured and in clean condition.

Effects of Basic Slag

The first and chief effect of slag on white straw crops is to supply them with phosphoric acid, a plant food which they often urgently need, particularly on clay loam. The use of a phosphate on land requiring phosphoric acid is to produce a stronger and healthier plant with straw less likely to go down, and a larger yield of plumper grain. Basic slag also supplies a little free lime, which has a sweetening effect on the soil, encouraging the action of the nitrifying bacteria, while the lime may also be used by the plant as food should it require it.

Basic slag cannot possibly impoverish the soil, but if anyone were so foolish as never to use anything else on a field that responded well to slag, and were year after year to remove the crops, never putting anything back, the land would naturally get poorer in all the other plant foods, but phosphoric acid and lime, but what else could you expect considering that basic slag only supplies these two ingredients.

Prevention of Milk Fever

A word of precaution for the prevention of so-called milk fever may be seasonable and serviceable. In the first place, it may be said that the common name of the ailment is a misnomer, as there is practically no fever accompanying it. It is a partial paralysis, and is properly named parturient paresis, and is generally the result of milking the udder empty too soon after calving. It has been noticed that, in the case of cows calving on the run, where the calf does the milking first, and takes but a little at a time for the first few days, milk fever is unknown. The same is true as a rule, in the case of the beef breeds, where the cows are allowed to rear the calves.

The content of the udder at calving is colostrum, a very different substance which is intended by nature for a specific purpose—the moving of the bowels of the calf—and this, if suddenly removed, causes a collapse of the tissues and glands, causing a paralysis of the system. In proof of the correctness of this theory, it is only necessary to recall that, in numerous cases, where the cows have been down, and unconscious for hours, and even days, the simple filling of the udder with air has restored them to health, without the use of any medicine. And in ordinary cases a complete cure has been effected, within two or three hours.

Prevention is, of course, better than cure, and if the calf is taken from the cow, to be raised by hand, the udder should be only partially milked out for the first three days. It is better for the calf that it be allowed to suck for that time, but not necessary if the dam's new milk be given it in small quantity and warm. There is very little danger of the udder being spoiled by Nature's provision for the occasion, the colostrum contained. It will be noticed that when in such case the udder is very large and caked, it is cold, and gives no symptoms of fever, and, by oiling and rubbing it, the caked condition usually gives way in the course of a week or two. Furthermore, it is seldom, if ever, that milk fever occurs in the case of a heifer with her first calf and seldom in a cow younger than four years.

The proper course, therefore, is to prevent the trouble, by partial milking for three or four days. And if this precaution has been neglected, and the ailment occurs, a bicycle pump, or a rubber bulb syringe, with a test tube, disinfected by immersion in boiling water, should be used to pump each quarter full of air, tying the udder with the hands to force the air up into the system. A bicycle pump is the most effective, as it does the work quickly and thoroughly.

Do not allow dosing with medicine, as when paralyzed, the cow cannot swallow, and the medicine will almost surely go into the windpipe and lungs, surely causing death. Hundreds of valuable cows have been killed by dosing under such circumstances. The use of pure oxygen or sterilized air for filling the udder is doubtless safer than common air, but if care is taken in disinfecting the test tube, and gently placing it in the teat there is little risk of damage to the udder.

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Holding Eggs for Hatching

Results secured with eggs held for a considerable time before being incubated vary quite widely and are dependent on several factors. Experiments indicate that with eggs of good fertility, kept in a reasonably cool room or cellar, there is little difference in hatchability when held for ten days or two weeks regardless of the condition under which they are kept; or the position in which they are placed. After that time, important differences are often noticed. Doubtless, the general opinion that eggs for hatching should be incubated as soon as possible after being laid is correct. It is often necessary, however, to hold them for a considerable length of time before setting, and it is a matter of practical importance to know the best possible conditions under which to keep eggs for hatching and the length of time for which they may be held.

The common methods of holding eggs for hatching are more or less at fault as compared with natural conditions. It is observed that eggs held for two or three weeks are usually several hours later in hatching than fresh eggs similarly incubated and that there are more infertile eggs more dead germs and more feeble chickens than from fresh eggs. It is not probable that there is any such difference between the first and last eggs laid by hens which have stolen their nests and have laid out a full setting and incubated them without being molested. Under such conditions, eggs are often exposed to considerable variation in temperature and necessarily vary in age, the first egg being two or perhaps three weeks older than the last egg laid. There is no reason to believe, however, that under natural conditions, the oldest eggs are any slower in hatching or produce a smaller proportion of chicks than the fresh ones or that the chicks are lacking in vitality. It is a common observation that under favorable conditions such eggs practically all hatch and the chicks are vigorously and vigorous. The statement that hens that steal their nests are more vigorous than the average of the flock is sometimes offered in explanation of this fact, though no experiments appear to have been made bearing upon this point. There are, however, good reasons for believing that something is due to different treatment received by the eggs prior to incubation.

Fertilization of the egg takes place in the upper part of the oviduct several hours before being laid, and embryonic development has already made some progress, when the eggs are extruded. There is, therefore, in each fertile egg, when laid, a living embryo, the development of which remains stationary during the period of time for which the egg is held. The exact limit to which we can go in delaying incubation without destroying life depends on several factors, as for example, the vigor of the breeding stock, the temperature at which the eggs are being held, and the position in which they are placed. It appears also to be conditioned upon whether or not the vitality of the embryo has been conserved or maintained by daily warming. The latter point has apparently been overlooked by investigators, but the results of long series of experiments indicate that this point is of considerable importance. A consideration of the conduct of the hen under normal conditions will help make this point plain.

The laying hen regularly remains on the nest for a period ranging from one half hour to two hours when laying, conduct not in any way known to be associated with the act of laying. It is believed that the explanation for this peculiar conduct is to be found in the instinct which prompts the hen to remain on the nest for a sufficient period to warm the embryos of the eggs already laid. If this is the true explanation, it follows that eggs warmed daily for the proper time should remain hatchable for a longer time, should hatch larger percentages and more promptly when incubated, and should produce stronger and more vigorous chicks than eggs held for the same time without warming. The practical difficulties in the way of ascertaining the correctness of this theory have been numerous. Many of the experiments have been more or less imperfect and unsatisfactory. It is fair to say however that all previous tests have in varying measures sustained the theory.

The practical value of this observation will depend upon the working out of a convenient means of warming eggs held for hatching, but its importance seems to warrant the effort. Some method will have to be devised to bring the eggs into direct contact with a heated surface, the temperature of which can be maintained at the temperature of the hen's body. Incubators are not available for the purpose, as too much time is required to secure the proper temperature of present methods of heating.

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R. C. DESROCHERS,
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