

variety of soils, the best results are obtained on a rich, friable, deep sandy loam. Such a loam should be well drained yet retentive of moisture. This crop requires a considerable amount of moisture, yet an excess is very harmful. The more loose and open the soil is, consistent with the other factors, the better shaped the tubers will be. A heavy soil always results in smaller potatoes with a higher percent. of ill-formed ones.

For this reason it is advisable to have potatoes follow sod, as the decaying vegetable matter so supplied serves to keep the soil open and to retain moisture. Clover sod is especially desirable for this purpose on account of the large amount of nitrogen it contains. In fact, this method is rapidly gaining in popularity and is now very generally used. By giving a light application of barnyard manure to the clover in the autumn, all the fertilizer ingredients required for the succeeding crop are supplied. Green manure may be applied in the fall, but only well rotted manure should be put on in the spring.

Where commercial fertilizers are applied, the following formula for a complete fertilizer is most generally used:—250 lbs. Nitrate of Soda; 350 lbs. Superphosphate and 200 lbs. of Muriate of Potash, the whole being applied at the rate of from 600 to 800 lbs. per acre.

SELECTION OF SEED AND TREATMENT OF SETS

The tubers used for seed purposes should be medium to large in size and as near the true type as possible. These should be cut into sets, each containing from two to three eyes with a reasonably large portion of the body of the potato attached. As a rule the larger the number of eyes to the set the higher percentage of unmarketable potatoes will be in the subsequent crop. The necessity of having a fairly large set will be seen when it is understood that the young plant must depend wholly upon this source for its nourishment until it has produced a sufficient number of roots to supply its own needs.

The sets should be planted as soon after cutting as possible. It has been proved that the practice of keeping them several days before planting results in a decreased yield. When it is necessary to keep them, owing to the unfavorable weather conditions, etc., it is advisable to cover them with land plaster or gypsum. This is for the purpose of preventing evaporation of moisture.

PLANTING

The planting should be done as early as possible in the spring as is consistent with safety from spring frosts. The soil should previously be very thoroughly prepared. Spring plowing is generally advisable except where the soil is heavy, in which case fall plowing materially assists in opening it up through the action of the plow. The plowing should be followed with sufficient thorough cultivation to make the soil loose and open to a depth of at least five inches.

Much diversity of opinion exists regarding the proper method of planting. Where potatoes are grown on a large commercial scale, the use of a good potato-planter is to be recommended. The very appreciable saving in time and labor and the greater uniformity of depth and distance apart of the sets are the main advantages of this method.

Probably the method most generally adopted is that of opening a deep furrow with a double mould board plow. After the sets are dropped they may be covered with the same implement. The furrow should be sufficiently deep so that when the sets are covered and the soil levelled, the sets will be from three to four inches below the surface, depending upon the texture of the soil and the season of crop required. On heavy land, fairly shallow planting is advisable, while on medium to light soil a depth of from four to five inches gives the best results.