

On the selection of a field for strawberries, it is very important to choose one free from all kinds of seeds and roots not decomposed.

MULCHING

This consists in covering the surface of the ground with something that is not injurious to the plant, to protect it from the intense heat of the sun or extreme cold. From one to four inches in depth is the usual custom; the latter depth for pear, peach, and other fruit trees.

For the strawberry, we prefer, as soon as the plants are set, at whatever season of the year, to cover the entire surface of the ground, including the walks, with tan bark, new or old, to the depth of one inch, care being taken that it is left very thin—only a slight coating—immediately around the crown of the plant. We have pursued this plan, and have never known a plant injured by it; on the contrary, they have been decidedly benefitted. When using saw-dust, we have sometimes been a little troubled with mildew, but never with tan bark applied as above. Some of our most intelligent horticulturists say it is a specific manure for the strawberry, which others deny; we find it, at least, the best thing brought to our notice as a mulch. It is excellent to retain moisture and keep the earth in fine condition under it; very few weeds will ordinarily trouble us, where the tan is one inch in thickness, and altogether it is excellent. Where tan cannot be obtained, saw-dust will do, if not applied too thick. Leaf-mould is very good, if the soil is not already too rich. Straw is good, but green rowen or fresh-cut grass, if the seeds are not ripe, is better still; any thing, in fact, not injurious, that is convenient and adapted, can be used.

WATER.

The strawberry has a great relish for good, clear, cold water. We have often seen them take a strong shower-bath at midday, in the face of the hottest sun in July, without shivering. A slight sprinkling, just to lay the dust, does not satisfy them, but a thorough soaking is what they delight in—say a pailful of water to every six or eight plants, or every four feet square of earth. If you say "this calls for a great deal of hard work," we answer then, "do not repeat it so often, but do it thoroughly whenever attempted." A few weeks since, we sent a friend some plants of new and rare kinds. A drought prevailed, and we feared he would neglect them, so we called to see them, and found he had set out and sprinkled them in the lightest, and most delicate manner possible. Another friend to whom we gave a few plants at the same dry time, gave them a thorough and repeated drenching, and saved all his plants.

A garden engine is very convenient in a strawberry plot, for watering purposes or a stream of water so situated as to irrigate, is better still. A water-ran, and water brought up in pipes, will accomplish the same thing. Ordinarily, during the bearing season, sufficient rain falls, so that very little watering is needed: some seasons are so wet that no water is needed until the bearing season is over, and then the plants do not particularly require it; but a drought will soon compel the strawberry to cease bearing in ordinary soils. The remedy or preventive is water, water, every day, and sometimes every night and morning. The evening, just at sundown, is the best time to water plants; and in some cases it is desirable that the water should have been exposed to the sun and air before being applied, but we do not think this is necessary for the strawberry.

CULTIVATION.

Most persons bestow, erroneously, most of their

labor in raising strawberries on their cultivation. On the contrary, if our directions so far are strictly followed, the work is mostly done, except gathering the fruit. We have very little work to do in the way of cultivation after planting, except watering and occasional pulling of weeds which appear through the tan, and neither of these ordinarily requires much time or labour. They must be kept clean and in good order, but we are very careful not to allow the hoe to be used nearer than eight inches to any full-grown plant, and, consequently, it is seldom or never used about the beds after the first month's planting. The reason is, the numerous fibrous roots so interlace and fill the ground for a space of six or eight inches around the plant, coming so completely to the surface, that the use of the hoe will cut off great numbers of these little roots, and we are unwilling to have our plants maimed in this way. It certainly greatly injures their bearing. The fork or spade should be kept at the same distance, for the same reason. The only time, during the year, we loosen the soil in our beds with the fork, is immediately at the close of the season of bearing, selecting the time when the ground is moist. And yet, we repeat, the strawberries must be kept clean; and the reader may here see a reason for all the minute and particular description we have given in the preparation. It needs to be thoroughly done, because it cannot well be remedied afterwards. The plants will not admit of freely working among them, except with the hand, if not kept at an unusual distance from each other, without largely reducing the crop of fruit. If our object is large and abundant fruit, the roots must not be disturbed.

One qualification to the above. When new plants are set, unless prevented by mulching immediately, we, as often as every three days or week, for a month or so, hoe or rake the ground freely, and always stir the soil as close to the plants, as often, and as much as possible only being cautious not to disturb the roots.

RENEWAL OF BEDS.

This should be done once in three or four years, and the same ground should be planted with corn or potatoes for one season, and receive an application of lime, ashes, and salt, as advised in the article on the preparation of the ground, before it is again used for strawberries. The bed might be made to bear well, by a careful renewal of the old plants by their runners, for ten or a dozen years, but this would require rather more skill in cultivation than most persons possess.

Every year or two, if a strong runner has struck itself beside an old plant, we pull up the old plant, instead of the runner, and are constantly thus renewing them. We always leave the best plants. The field cultivator has only to clean off the weeds, and prepare the soil in the spaces of three feet between the rows; allow the runners to cover that ground; then drive the cultivator or plough through, turning under the old row of plants; thin out his new ones to proper distances, and his system of renewal is complete.

TREATMENT OF BOOTS AND SHOES WHEN BURNED.—In our juvenile days we had occasion, too often, to need a cure for carelessness in burning our boots, and we used to apply, with good effect, an application we have seen recently in a late exchange. Apply, very liberally, and instantly, soft-soap to the burned leather, till it is perfectly saturated. If not too badly burned, the leather will be soft and pliable as before.