

HOW TO CUT WILLOWS.

Willow sets, as commonly planted, would have the appearance of fig. 1. It will be perceived that one eye is above the ground, and more frequently there are two. At the end of the first summer's growth, it has the appearance of fig. 2. These, we will suppose, are cut back, as shown at fig. 3.* It will be seen that a "snag" is left on the old stem, which will increase at all subsequent cuttings, leaving

can answer for it; the contrast in the willow-beds will be still greater than on paper. Little explanation is necessary on this point. The rods given by a stool like fig. 4 have to draw all their nourishment through the stem, and will, as a consequence, be weak in contrast with those given by a stool like fig. 9. Where the whole stool, to the very top, is in the ground, roots are emitted from every point, and the stools swell accordingly; and when growth commences in spring, shoots will be thrown up all around

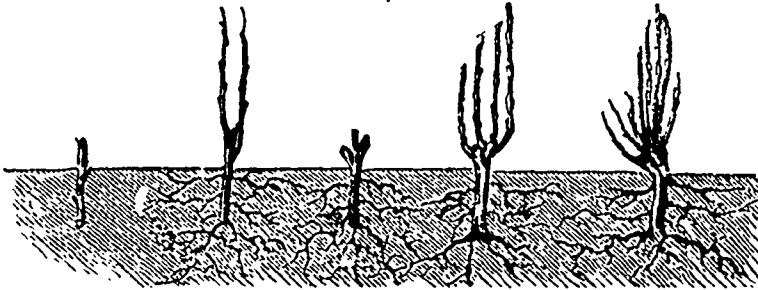


Fig. 1. Fig. 2. Fig. 3. Fig. 4. Fig. 5.

a short stem of it, perhaps a few inches, between them and the surface of the ground. At the end of the second year, we have a plant like fig. 4; and at the end of the third year, like fig. 5. At this and subsequent ages, many of the "stools" will be getting one-sided, from the breaking off of "snags" by carelessness or accident; and when the stools stand close together, many shoots will be weak and worthless. This is a very bad system of cutting, yet in England

the stool, from the under side of the headed-down branches. These shoots springing out of the soil, as soon as fairly growing, also emit roots in every direction, from the point of junction with the previous year's wood. It will be clearly seen, under circumstances such as these—a stool from which roots ramify in every direction, with the young rods rooting into the soil as well—the rods must, as a consequence, be of superior growth to the other system. From

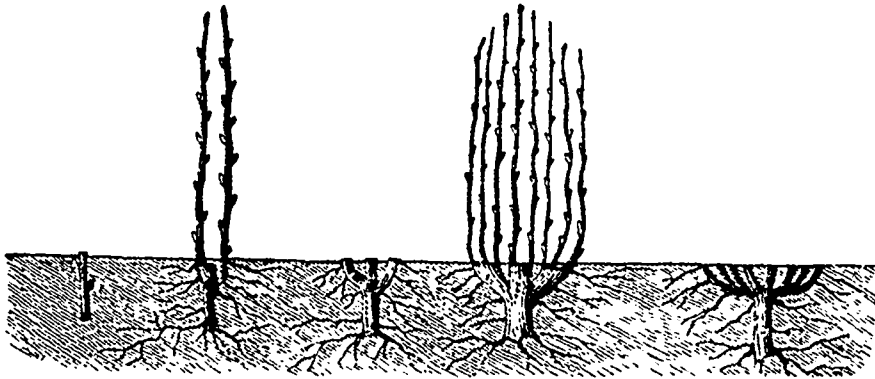


Fig. 6. Fig. 7. Fig. 8. Fig. 9. Fig. 10.

it is the general one. A much better system is practiced by a few good growers. When the cutting is planted, it has the appearance of fig. 6—the top bud level with the surface of the ground. It will be found that the shoots given the first summer, as shown at fig. 7, will be much stronger than that shown at fig. 2. The reason is obvious: as soon as the shoot fairly commences growing, roots are emitted at the base of the pushing buds, which, being near the surface, greatly assist their growth. When these are cut back, it must be done close to the surface of the ground, as seen at fig. 8. The next summer the stools will give a luxuriant growth of "rods," as at fig. 9, showing a great contrast to stools of the same age, as at fig. 4. Persons unacquainted with willow-growing must not think this overdrawn, as I

the system of cutting back, the stool spreads to a considerable distance; three feet in diameter will soon be common in a good soil and under good culture. I have seen them much wider. The rods having more distance, and deriving the same nourishment from the parent stool, are not only long, but uniform in size. If cut on the other system, many weak shoots will be given, for want of room, air, nourishment, &c. This system of cutting close to the ground must be adhered to at all subsequent cuttings. It will be plainly seen that under this mode the stools must be planted at a considerable distance apart,—on no account should they be closer than three feet each way; three and a half feet will be a still better distance; and on favorable soils, with the very strongest willows, four feet each way will not be too much.

* It is much better not to head them back until the end of the second year, as it materially strengthens the stools. Many good growers occasionally let their old plantations stand two years, to give them regater vigor.

I am happy to be able to endorse all that Mr. DOWNING says of the willow imported by Dr. GRANT. It is now twelve years since I became acquainted