

Special Contributors.

A Chatty Letter from the States.

[FROM OUR CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT.]

The agitation at the Chicago stock yards concerning the sale of pregnant animals for food, particularly sows, has become somewhat exciting. For years it has been the custom for buyers to take such hogs in a general load, paying one price for all, and deducting or "docking" 40 lbs. for the unmerchantable sows.

Abuses grew out of the system by the dockers hired by the packers arbitrarily demanding more dockage than they were entitled to. It is needless to explain all of the details, but suffice it to say that the abuse of the rule became very obnoxious and intolerable. The packers were virtually stealing by rule in broad daylight. The commission salesmen, at the demands of their country customers, resolved to abolish the rule entirely, and have all kinds of stock sold on its merits. The packers resisted stubbornly, and it will probably be some time before the affair is properly adjusted.

The question is, Should such stock be allowed to go into human consumption? What raiser of hogs would kill such stock to supply his own meat house?

Well known hog raisers say that it is next to impossible to get the most good in fattening hogs where there are "open" sows in the lot wanting to associate with the boar. This can be overcome by spaying the sows that are designed for market. An experienced hog raiser says he has found that in that operation he loses one hog in twenty, and that it does not pay. But we have heard of men who would spay whole herds and insure them for 10c. per head. This would pay, because at market a spayed sow is worth at least 25c. per cwt. more than an "open" one.

It is a fact that the operation of spaying is not very difficult, and is frequently performed in a few minutes by a man with a little experience and a good jack-knife. Spayed sows or spayed heifers fatten as well, and are as valuable at market, as barrows and bullocks.

Thin fleshed old sows are much easier to alter than fat or young hogs. Under these circumstances then a good policy to pursue would be to raise from one to three litters of pigs from each sow, then spay and fatten her for market. Pork packers say that if altered after having even five litters, they will fatten as well and look almost as trim as the smoothest barrow.

Effects of the Frost on Strawberry Blossoms.

BY W. W. HILBORN, ARKONA.

The past has been the most unfavorable season within my knowledge for strawberries. Last summer was so unfavorable to the growth of plants, the spring being so very dry, with a heavy frost on the morning of May 29th—four degrees of frost were registered after daylight—that it affected the blossoms of the various sorts about as follows:—

All berries set on and all blossoms open were killed on all varieties.

WILSON'S ALBANY, about one half out in blossom; many killed which were not open.

CRESCENT SEEDLING, about one-fourth out; not many killed not out; plenty of blossoms left for a crop. Very promising.

KENTUCKY AND CAPT. JACK, not many out, but few hurt not out.

MAGGIE AND ALPHA, more than half out, not many hurt not out.

ARNOLD'S PRIDE, BRIGHT IDA, AND SHARPLESS, one half out; a great number hurt not out; foliage also hurt to some extent.

CINDERELLA, BIDWELL, MINER'S PROLIFIC AND NEW DOMINION, about one-third out, not many hurt not out.

PIPPER'S SEEDLING, about one-third out; quite a number hurt not out; plenty fruit buds left for a crop.

SENECA QUEEN, one half out; not many hurt not out; enough buds left for a crop.

GOLD DEFIANCE AND MT. VERNON, just beginning to open; quite a number hurt not out; enough left for a crop.

EARLY CANADA, out most of any, perhaps two-thirds open; not many hurt not open; this is a very promising early sort.

DANIEL BOONE, MANCHESTER AND JAMES VICK, just beginning to open; not hurt to any extent. These appear to be safest against late spring frosts of any of the varieties thus far tested.

JERSEY QUEEN, none out; a great number killed not out; fruit buds most tender of any variety.

MRS. GARFIELD, just beginning to open; quite a number killed not open.

It is not often we have a frost so late that is heavy enough to do so much harm, but it is safest to plant such varieties as Crescent Seedling, Daniel Boone, Manchester, James Vick and Capt. Jack; for large plantations they will give the best satisfaction of the many varieties we have tested.

Garden and Orchard.

The Art of Budding.

BY HORTUS.

Budding, as it is termed, is a simple and expeditious method of propagating all kinds of fruit and ornamental trees, roses, etc. It is an art so easily learned that no farmer or fruit grower should be without knowing it, and be able to practice it successfully. The month of August is the best time for the operation, as at this season of the year the sap of the tree rapidly callouses and heals over.

The budding knife, which is made for the purpose, can be procured at the hardware stores or from seedsmen. Having provided himself with one and a pruning knife to do the strong cutting, the budder commences to get his cions. These should be of this season's growth and should be selected carefully, as a great part of the success lies in having good cions. They should be selected neither too soft nor too hard, or in other words, neither too green nor too ripe. The proper state may be known by cutting off a few buds and removing the wood from the bark neatly and without tearing the inner bark or disturbing the eye of the bud. If the wood comes away freely from the bark the buds are in a good condition, but should the wood not come out without tearing the bark the cion is too ripe for use. Remove the leaves of the cions as soon as cut, for if left on too long they soon evaporate the sap in the cion and will destroy the buds. Cut the leaves off, leaving half an inch of the stem to protect the bud and to serve as a catch by which the budder, when inserting the bud, can push it in with the end of the handle of his knife. When the cions are gathered and

trimmed, they should be placed in damp moss and away from the air. In this medium they will keep for weeks fresh and good and fit for budding. For tying use any medium strength of twine, such as No. 8 Carpetwarp or Bassmat. The budder is now ready to commence, having previously got his knife properly sharpened. It is necessary to keep your knife with a keen edge, as the cuts and slits should be made clean and neat. There are many different methods of budding which people practice, but the best one is to make two cuts on the bark the shape of a T, one cut crosswise or lateral on the stock or branch, then one lengthwise, about an inch in length. With the sharpened end of the knife-handle carefully pry up the corner edges of the bark, slipping the end of the bud in, and gently push into place underneath the bark, being very careful not to bruise or touch the little bud, but press underneath the axil of the leaf-stalk when pressing the bud into place. In cutting buds off the cion the budder holds the cion from him, the thickest part, or where the cion was cut from the tree, outwards, and cuts the buds towards him. A little practice will soon teach the budder how to remove them neatly and quickly. A bud when cut off should be not less than one inch in length, having the eye of the bud proper in the centre. It should be cut evenly, and the cut may be made in depth to about a third of the whole thickness of the cion. Tying is very important and on this rests the principal success of budding. Commence the string by crossing it evenly around the base of the cut on the stock below the bud, and wind it around evenly and upward, making sure to hold it firmly without slacking when twisting around. See that it is close and firmly by the eye of bud, but not covering it. Carry it up to the top of cut and tie it firmly. The bark of the stock should also part easily from the wood for the budding to be successful, for if the bark will not come away easily, but tears and drags, it is useless to try to do any budding there. After the buds are in and tied, no further care is required for a few weeks, when the strings may be removed. If the stocks are not growing the strings may be left on for a longer period, but if they are the strings must be taken off or they will strangle the buds. Plums should be budded first, then cherries, next apples and pears in the order named. Flowering chestnuts, elm, ashes, lilacs, and all kinds of ornamental trees are propagated by this method. Trees that ripen up their growth early should be done first. Budding may be commenced in the latter part of June, and can be successfully practiced till October. By this interesting process of propagation, the horticulturist can amuse himself with profit by budding several varieties of fruit on one tree of the same species. By this means also new varieties of fruit may be tried, as they come sooner into bearing than by waiting to grow young trees. Cions may be sent anywhere by mail or express, provided they are properly packed. Roses are easily propagated by budding, and, in fact, this work is the most important now going on in all the nurseries. Many thousands of the most intelligent nursery hands all over the States and Canada are now busy with bent backs and skillful fingers inserting the delicate buds so diminutive and small that they can scarcely be seen, placed in position that in time will grow forth into the sturdy tree, whose rugged limbs and dividing branches bear bushels and barrels of luscious fruit. In the pursuit of gardening and horticulture there arises many interesting operations, but none more so or more useful and instructive than that of budding.