

Growing Potatoes

The Practice Followed by Successful Growers in Great Britain and Elsewhere

Though potato growing is largely a side issue on the part of the majority of Canadian farmers, it is nevertheless an important part of the farm work. To be without potatoes for dinner is a hardship that no one who works all day in the fields should be called upon to endure. With comparatively little effort, if the season be favorable, every farmer can grow enough potatoes for his home use. But should he stop at that? Might it not be possible, if a little more care and attention were given to the subject, to produce a better quality of product that would fetch the top price on the market after the home demand has been supplied? The general complaint is that if the crop is good the price is so low that the potatoes are hardly worth the trouble of

potato very extensively, and as is well known, it forms a very large part of the Green Isle's export trade. In England, Scotland and the Isle of Jersey potato growing is perhaps made more of a business by many large farmers. Frequently from 100 to 300 acres on one farm are devoted to potato growing.

SELECTING SEED.

The common plan in securing seed in Great Britain, as elsewhere, is to select from the tubers. By this plan the life of the plant may be prolonged year after year, until, through weakness or deterioration, it comes to an end. For this reason Mr. Sutton concludes that improvement of the quality of the potato is impracticable by the selection of the tubers. It is, therefore, not surprising that a constant repetition of growth from the tuber should, sooner or later, bring with it a loss of vigor resulting in diminished productiveness and a greater susceptibility to the attacks of disease. If the soils are very heavy or very light and sandy a judicious change of seed will help to postpone the evil day, but in a sandy loam, which is considered the best



A WESTERN FARM HOME.

digging. While there may be exceptionable years when this is the case, there are oftener seasons when potatoes are a comparatively scarce article, and bring a good price in our cities. At least those who have to buy think so. But aside from all this every farmer grows potatoes, and why should he not do his best to grow the very best and latest kinds of potatoes?

Though the potato is a native of America, there is no place where the culture of this useful tuber is given so much attention as in Great Britain and the Channel Islands. In the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England for the last quarter of 1898 a very interesting treatise on the potato is given by A. W. Sutton.

The writer traces the history of the potato and its introduction into England in the sixteenth century. From that time on the development of potato growing has been marvellous. In Ireland, which may be termed the real home of the modern potato, the individual who is unable to grow enough potatoes to thicken his butter milk is in very hard straits indeed. The small farmers there cultivate the

for potato growing, a change of seed is not considered so beneficial. The writer advises that when a change of seed does not help matters the substituting of some other and newer variety than the one that has been grown should be made. Whether it is wise to attempt to grow one variety in the same district for many successive years will depend entirely on local and personal considerations. Recorded lists of potatoes for the past century show that, one after another, favorite potatoes cease to be grown. But there are always new varieties coming forward raised from robust stock. These new varieties are raised from the potato seed, a plan which Mr. Sutton advises following in order to get vigorous growth. It takes time to grow potatoes from the seed, and perhaps farmers in this country will prefer to leave that task to experimenters and seedsmen. However this may be, it is necessary that the farmer should change his seed potatoes frequently, and not only that, but he should introduce new varieties. The introduction of new and constitutionally strong potatoes makes the ravages of diseases common to potatoes less effective.