# A Page for the MODERN FARMER

## - NEWSY NOTES -

By AGRICOLA

### NOTES ON ISLAND PLANTS

**The Scrophulariaceae**

This large and rather important family takes its name from the genus Scrophularia, which was formerly had in repute as a cure for the disease called Scrofula. These particular plants have been found in N. B. and Quebec, but not in this Province as yet. However we have several other members of the family that will repay our consideration.

The first of these is the Common Mullein, **Verbascum Thapsus.** From a large basal rosette of pale-green velvety leaves there springs a tall stem, adorned here and there with smaller leaves and terminating in a long spike of yellow flowers. The spike is not as pretty as it might be, since only a few flowers open at a time; and often the whole plant is covered with wind-blown sand and looks very shabby. The seeds of the Mullein are said to have medicinal properties, and are understood to be an emetic. The infusion of the dried leaves was formerly used in colds and bronchial affections generally. The Mullein is distasteful to cattle in some manner; perhaps from the sand it generally carries, or from some peculiar taste. It is host to a small black thrips, which is common among the "wool" of the leaves in the fall. Sir James Hooker remarks that the woolly leaves were once used for lamp wicks.

There is a good garden species, **Verbascum Libani,** which as its name shows, hails from the Lebanon Mountains. The spike is long, the flowers are all open together and are sweetly fragrant. The leaves are covered with a white velvety "pile." This Mullein is extremely long-lived; a plant in my flower border completed its fourteenth year in 1940!

With regard to the Yellow Toadflax, **(Linaria vulgaris)** it is a weed we could well do without. It is very persistent in cultivated ground, spreading from the roots in hayfields and perfecting its seeds even after the hay has been cut. In shape the flower is very like that of the garden Snapdragon or Antirrhinum, but the color is pale yellow and orange which has gained the plant another popular name —"Butter and Eggs." Such a flower, with two lips and a spur, is said to be "personate"; but at times, rarely perhaps, the Toadflax tries to get away from this form and produces "peloria" flowers with five radiating spurs and an individed, pear-shaped corolla. (I have found "peloria flowers on other Linaris namely L. dalmatica and L. cymbalaria both cultivated plants). The spur is a nectary, holding a sweet fluid for the delectation of the big wild bees who are able to enter the flower and so provide for its fertilization. From its linear leaves it was, in some regions of Britain, called Flaxwort; and in the U. S. A., according to the "Treasury of Botany," it was called "Ramstead." The juice is said to attract flies, and mixed with milk it was formerly used as a cosmetic. A yellow dye can be obtained from this plant. Medically the Toadflax is reputedly purgative and duretic. In olden days the monks cultivated it as a garden plant.

Professor Herbert Groh, of Ottawa, found the Lesser Toadflax (L. minor) here in 1926, and I have since then found it growing in a bed of carrots in a field. I supposed it to have been introduced with the carrot seed. It is a smaller, slenderer plant an annual; and the flower is pale purple with the lower lip whitish and the palate yellow. Nothing is known of its properties.

John MacSwain's list of "Flowering Plants of Prince Edward Island" (issued as a supplement to Sproiton's High School Botany), gives the "Beard-Tongue" (Pentstemon pubescens) as found here. His description is: Stem 1-2 ft. high; leaves oblong to lanceolate, 2-4 inches long, the radical (leaves) ovate or oblong; corolla inflated, bell-shaped or 2-lipped, upper lip 2-lobed, lower 3-cleft, all dull violet or purplish or partly whitish. The fifth (and sterile) filament is yellow-bearded. This plant is probably confined to some locality I've not yet visited.

The Turtlehead **(Chelone glabra)** on the contrary is well distributed and well-known, at least to botanists. It prefers moist ground such as the brookside, or even wet woods. The stem is four-sided —you remember what I said in the closing paragraph of the Labiates? —and unbranched, but well supplied with opposite lanceolate leaves. The white flowers, each curiously shaped like a turtle's head, form a short dense spike at the summet of the plant. This plant is worthy of quarters in the garden and may be propagated by seed, by division in the fall, or by stem cuttings in summer. Another name for this plant is "Balmony," for which I can find no explanation. In the herbals the Chelone is credited with being a purgative, a vermifuge for children, and a remedy for dyspepsia and jaundice.

A close neighbor of the Turtlehead is the Square-stemmed Monkey Flower, **(Mimulus ringens).** It too, delight in the brookside, and doesn't object to wet feet. The stem is slender, smooth and branched as a rule; and the leaves are opposite. The flower is of the Antirrhinum kind but is "ringent"; that is the lips are not closed like those of the Toadflax but are "gaping": also the flower is of a beautiful color between blue and lavender. Another Mimulus which is probably destined to become a troublesome weed in the Province is the creeping **M. moschatus,** known in England as the Musk Plant; which is there grown in windows and conservatories. The stems and leaves are beset with long fine hairs, which secrete a sticky fluid. The small yallow flowers are ringent, and smell of musk, but there is a lamentation among botanists: they assert that the plant is losing its fragance. A few years ago, in the Appin Road district, I saw brooks literally choked by the Mimulus.

Next we turn to the brackish river-banks and shores to find the Mudwort, **(Limosella aquatica.)** This is a small creeping annual with slender runners; the leaves of our variety have no "blade", and so are awl-shaped or else thread-like. The flowers are small, white or purplish.

### Concerning Fruit Trees

The mail has just brought me a pamphlet headed "The Production of Tree Fruits on Prince Edward Island." This booklet (which is the joint work of Dr. J. A. Clark, Superintendent, and Mr. G. C. Warren, Assistant Horticulturist, of the Charlottetown Experimental Station) is the most practical and timely exposition of the subject that I have read for a long time. It helps the novice to select the proper location for the orchard (it is surprising, runs my thoughts, to find how many of us are really novices in this important matter); then it names a few select varities of fruit trees and gives particular directions as to planting. Many trees are lost every year through ignorance of the rules laid down in this little treatise. Sod mulch, the use of fertilizer, and the pruning of the orchard, all receive adequate notice. Whether you already have an orchard or are only thinking of starting one, you need this practcal little work; and you will get it, I think, by dropping a line to the Experimental Station, City.

### "Gathering Winter Fuel."

In the spring-time of other years one might see every day a procession of laden woodsleighs, taking home the logs to be sawn up, split and dried for fuel for the following winter. There are very few of such cavalcades this spring of 1941, because the woods are full of snow so deep that it is impossible to work in them. This condition will remedy itself just when the roads get too bad for hauling.

The Dominion authorities published (some time ago) a rather interesting comparison of the different woods as fuel. The best hardwood are beech, yellow brich, rock elm, hickory, rock maple and oak; one and one-quarter cords of these are calculated to produce as much heat as the burning of a ton of anthracite coal. The next best hardwoods are ash, white birch, black cherry, red, and white elm, and silver marple; it takes one and one-half cords of these to give the same amount of heat. Then, bringing up the rear are the light hardwoods, alder, basswood, butternut, and poplar; it takes two cords of these to equal a ton of coal.

### The Story of Beowulf

The story of Beowulf, an Anglo-Saxon saga of the seventh century, is well known to students of history as one of the oldest poems in the language. A summary of it would sound like one of Grimm's fairy-tales, yet it has dignity and reality in spite of its fantastic character. There is no evidence that the hero, Beowulf the Great, ever existed, but many of the Scandinavian Kings and chiefs mentioned in the poem, are actually historical figures. Among Beowulf's exploits are the maiming of the monster Grendal, and the slaying of his witch-mother beneath the waters of a lake; the hero, grown old, is fatally wounded by a fiery dragon which is guarding a hoard of treasure in a tumulus.

The poem is in short lines, well supplied with alliteration. Here are five lines which will show how far the English language has advanced since Beowulf's day—

Tha waes on sande
Sae geap naca
Hladen here-waedum
Hringed Stefna
Maerum and mathrum.

The translation:—"There was on the sand: That spacious ship: Laden with army-garments: The ring-prowed vessel: With horses and treasures." My comments are: Sande has two syllables; the final "e," (which is sounded) is found in very many words right down to the time of Chancer. Geap is the same as gape and gap; it has the idea of openness: the Cumbrian still says "What's ta geapin' at?" (What are you gaping at?). I have translated it as spacious, though it may mean open, i. e., without a deck. Naca, a distant form of the Latin nauta, a sailor; applied to the ship itself. Here-waedum; here, an army, akin to "virl" Latin for men, and waedum, garments; that is, corslets and armor. We still use the word "weeds" but have restricted it to the mourning garments of a widow. The termination "um" is a case-ending meaning "with." The English language has thrown off all those troublesome endings, in favor of prepositions — a change for the better; though it took many generations to accomplish. The ringed vessel is mentioned elsewhere in Beowulf, without making it clear whether the "rings" were objects of ornament or utility. Maerum, the old word for horses, still survives in the word marshal, which originally meant horse-attendant or groom, but has crept up the social scale; while mare is restricted to the female of the species. The "um" is the case ending again. Mathrum is gone from the language: it meant gifts or treasures, but sounded uncouth.

These few lines are from the 28th chapter of Beowulf and are rather easy in comparison with some others in the story.

### Earthquakes Fewer

There are seven or eight thousand earthquakes annually but comparatively few of them get into the news. That is because most of them are of short duration and of little effect on life and property. Those that get into the news (sometimes in the press, often over the radio) are those that have caused damage or casualties; and it is these that I have tabulated for the past few years. By some law of nature as yet unknown, the violent earthquakes are most frequent between the beginning of October and the end of March, though their frequency seems to vary (unnaccountably with the year. In that period 1939-40, there were 21 major earthquakes and two volcanic eruptions that made news; in 1940-41, the number had fallen to 15, with no eruptions to speak of. There was evidence that lunar and planetary conjunctions had something to do with these manifestations, but there are not yet sufficient data to build any generalization upon.

## Points To Be Noted About Package Bees

The rich honey harvest of Canada is attractive to Southern bred bees and millions of them will soon be on their way to strategic points throughout the Dominion.

Those who are planning to receive package bees this year should arrange for their arrival during the latter part of April or the first two weeks of May, says C B. Gooderham, Dominion Apiarist, Central Experimental Farm. It should also be remembered that package bees are subject to the War Exchange tax of 10 per cent and arrangements should be made to pay this tax promptly so as to avoid damageing delay in delivery. All equipment necessary for the housing and feeding of the bees should be ready when they arrive. As soon as the packages are received stand them in a cool shady place and sprinkle the screening of the packages with cool water or thin sugar syrup and leave them until evening before hiving. There are several methods of hiving package bees but at one Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, preference is given the following: 1 Equip each hive with five drawn combs containing a good supply of honey and pollen. Place these combs to one side of the hive; 2. Remove the feeder can from the package and lift out the queen cage Remove the cover from the candy hole of this cage and push a nail through the candy. Suspend the cage between the two combs nearest the centre of the hive and shake a few bees from the package on top of the combs immediately above the queen cage; 3. Place a small pebble on the floorboard of the hive and stand the package, upside down, in the hive alongside the combs, taking care to rest one edge of the package on the pebble so that the bees may escape to the combs; 4. Cover the hive and reduce the entrance to one inch. Next morning remove the empty package replacing it with drawn comb. Twenty-four hours later see that the queen is released from her cage. Do not examine the colony for at least one week after installing the bees as idle curiosity too often kills good queens.

For further details write to the Division of Publicity and Extension Department of Agriculture, for a copy of "Package Bees" War Time Pamphlet No. 3.

## - CONSERVATION -

A WEEKLY COLUMN OF PRACTICAL OPINIONS OF THE VITAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE USES AND ABUSES OF NATURAL RESOURCES BY MR. LUDLOW JENKINS, MARSHFIELD.

### CANADIAN SLAUGHTER EXPLAINED

Silence which has surrounded the reason for slaughter of animals at Wainwright National Park last autumn was broken as game enthusiasts gathered in Calgary for the annual meeting of the Alberta Fish and Game Association.

The meeting was told that for years the animals have been suffering from tuberculosis, have been infested with 25 different types of parasites, and that the pasture in the park was not sufficient to feed the natural increase of animals there.

Faced with the necessity of drastic action the Dominion government evolved a plan of wiping out all the animals in the park, leaving it idle for three years, then restocking it with wildlife from other parks.

"So many carcasses slaughtered there were condemned and burned that friends told me they could smell the smoke as far south as Didsbury," W. C. Fisher, president of the association, stated.

One of the delegates said he had learned from a reliable source that ten per cent of the buffalo killed at Wainwright last autumn had been condemned and burned.

All carcasses were inspected by Dominion inspectors and only those found free from disease distributed to Indian reserves or sold to the public.

It was necessary to wipe out the entire herd, even though many of the animals were healthy, as any that might be removed to other reserves might carry disease to destroy the parasites.

The Albertan was told by delegates that protests had been made to the federal government concerning tuberculosis among the animals at Wainwright. However, nothing was done at that time and the situation finally became so bad that only drastic action would remedy it.

Dr. William Rowan, zoologist of the University of Alberta, when questioned, stated three years would be sufficient to kill all parasites and disease in the park. He said it would then be possible to restock the area with healthy animals from other game reserves.

It was reported government authorities were in no way responsible for the infestation of animals, and that the park had been run in a very excellent manner. It was said the animals contracted tuberculosis and parasites from domesticated cattle which had been allowed to graze off park pastures.

### MINK FROM FARMS

One of Vermont's newest industries, mink raising, continues on the upgrade, according to propagation permits already issued this year by the state department of conservation and development.

A total of 191 permits has been issued during the first three months of the new year as compared to 147 in 1939.

This increase in the number of ranches in the state has resulted despite the fact that, according to Director of Fish and Game George George W. Davis, "The market for pelts has suffered from the war and the dumping of Eastern furs on this market."

The growth in the mink-raising business, however, has not been confined to Vermont. Other parts of the United States, Canada and Alaska are competing in the field.

Director Davis explained that "one reason for the number of ranches is the abundant supply of fisheries by-products at the Boston and Portland fish piers and the short haul.

"Refrigerator trucks," he continued, "carry away tons of frozen fish which is available for mink food at about two and one-half cents a pound delivered." It costs about one and one-half cents a day to feed one of these animals.

The mink industry has had a phenomenal growth in a decade.

Ten years ago a furrier would not look twice at the pelt of a ranch mink and mink ranches were considered a joke.

To day, four out of every five mink pelts sold on the fur trader's exchange were born and bred on a mink ranch, figures show.

The mink trapper is rapidly being supplanted by the rancher who breeds these animals with the aid of a microscope, feeds them a dietitian's menu of fish, cod liver oil, and liver, and gives them distemper vaccinations.

The ranches are scattered throughout Vermont. Washington county has the largest number of animals, according to the state department figures.

No record exists of the number of mink in Vermont. The mink are bred once a year, in March. Less than a year later the off-spring, pelted, tanned and sewn will be the mink fur coats which cost, on an average of $2.000.

### THE WAY OF A BIRD

THE WAY OF A BIRD

The mystery of migration is as fascinating today as it ever was, and as inscrutable. In the autumn when nature is being lulled into somnolence the great trek of birds begins. In order to take the long flights necessary to reach their predetermined destination each bird must be in fit condition and well equipped to make the fight against high winds sudden storms and possible lack of feeding grounds. Changing into travelling garb and filling the avian knapsack against hunger as well as strengthening wings and entering into community plans for the trek are some of the important preparations of the travellers.

A change of plumage takes place so grandually that no time is the bird inconvienced by it. Two feathers one in each wing are the first to go. These are replaced by others which grow to half their eventual length before two others, equally symmetrical are shed. This contiuues until a wholly new travelling suit is the result. The new plumage is fitted to the exigencies of traval and is often quite different from the summer gaiety of the bird since it is designed to protect its wearer from flying enemies. The next step in preparation is a well filled food basket accomplished by storing up sufficient fat to allow flight where food is lacking.

Preparatory trial flights are made when, out of the tiny brains of this bird mass, is evolved a plan of action which carries it in a semblance of formation —at least, as a unit— many hundreds of miles to a known destination.

I once came upon a host of robins concentrating for their flight on a miniature island in the midst of a winding and protected waterway. As my canoe swung noislessly round a turn in the Run there arose a deafening sound startling, and unidentified because of its immediate nearness. Another stroke of the paddle brought me within sight of thousands and thousands, it seemed of robins rising, as startled as I into the air.

It is said that the pelican does no more than one and one-sixteenth strokes a second in its migratory flight, while the tiny hummingbird fastest of all migrants, does 200. The ruby-throated hummingbird travels to Yucatan across the Gulf of Mexico, a distance of 500 miles, without a pause, while the Golden Plover covers 2,000 miles from Alaska to Hawaii without rest.

## Garden Small Fruits

(Experimental Farms News)

The ideal garden, states R. D. L. Bligh, Assistant Superintendent, Dominion Experimental Station, Kentville, N.S., is large enough to grow both vegetables and small fruits. Small fruits, however, should only be attempted where the garden is to be of a permanent nature.

Every farm garden should be laid out with a degree of permanency to accommodate both fruits and vegetables. But in small plot town gardens, small fruits should not be attempted unless there is a suitable soil and ample unshaded space for their development.

It is an advantage to have strawberries in the farm garden. A new patch should be set each year. It fruits the year after planting and will continue fruitful another year if well cared for, but this practice is not advocated. Plant in early May, remove all blossoms from plants the year set. Keep thoroughly cultivated and allow runner plants to develop, eight to ten per mother plant. Mulch early in November for winter protection.

**Varieties:** (Early) Senator Dunlap, (Midseason) Catskill; (Late) Laurier (Originated by Experimental Farm, Ottawa).

These varieties are all self-fruitful, of high quality and productive. The Premier is not a prolific runner plant producer and may be set closer in the row than the others.

Raspberries take about three years to become established and remain, under proper care, fruitful for eight to ten years, planted in hills 4 feet by 4 feet or preferably in rows 8 feet apart and the canes 2 feet apart in row. Plant early May; before planting cut canes back to 18 inches from root, allow no blossoms or fruit to form during first year. Thorough, shallow cultivation to control woods and moisture is essential; allow sucker plants to develop at will. A little fruit may be produced in the second year but the plantation will not come into production before the third year. Raspberries produce fruit on one-year-old wood, therefore the removal of the old canes after harvest and a thinning out of the canes, leaving not more than two per square foot in the spring, is recommended.

**Varieties:** Plant only certified disease-free canes, Viking and Newburg, Herbert in the colder parts of the province.

Currants and gooseberries are surface-feeding plants and do best in a cool, moist, heavy, rich soil in a somewhat shaded position. Four to six plants each of gooseberries, red and black currants should give sufficient fruit for the average family. Attention is called to the fact that most species of the genus Ribes (currants and gooseberries) are hosts of the White Pine Blister Rust. A destructive disease of the white and all five-needle pines. It is therefore advisable when contemplating the growing of these fruits to know to what extent five-needle pines are about the garden and if numerous the culture of these fruits should be discouraged. Even in districts comparatively free from such pines, black currants fall a prey to this disease. The red currant varieties Viking and Franco-German are resistant to this disease. Plant strong, well-rooted, one-year-old plants in very early spring 4 feet by 4 to 6 feet, allow the grow in bush form, cultivate shallow, but thorough and frequent. Bushes become increasingly productive after third year. Pruning is essential. Black currants and gooseberries bear their fruit on wood of the previous season's growth (one-year wood), red currants on spurs from wood two to three years of age. Therefore, the objective in pruning is a system of renewal, vigorous young growth always coming on to replace the older branches, and as they become unproductive are pruned out. Prune in late autumn. The important point to remember is that the best fruit is produced on young wood.

**Gooseberry varieties** include Clark, Poorman, Sylvia, Careless. These are all hardy, vigorous-growing bushes with large, good quality fruit. The Poorman (a red gooseberry) thrives best on heavier types of soil. Clark, an English variety, is resistant to mildew.

**Red Currant Varieties:** Viking and Franco-German are rust resistant; Fay's Prolific and Diploma are not.

**Black Currant Varieties:** Kerry Magnus, Black Victoria.

Four or more roots of rhubarb, according to size and needs of the family, are recommended for every home fruit and vegetable garden. A deep, rich, well-drained and well-prepared soil is necessary to the successful growing of rhubarb. When resetting crowns taken from old dug-up clumps, single crowns should be selected. These or new crowns are set in early May about 5 feet apart, the growing tip just below the surface. Cultivate frequently and keep clear of weeds. Mulch with strawy manure late in autumn, remove in early spring and cultivate. Strong rapid growth of the leaves is the objective. Pull no stalks the first year and but few the second. After that never more than half the stalks that are developed. This results in large, long tender stalks for the table. Three or four years is necessary to develop a really productive crown. The object in planting rhubarb roots annually is to provide, after they have become established (which is about five years after planting) a number of plants that may be dug up annually for winter forcing in the household cellar.

Among the varieties are Ruby, McDonald, Early Sunrise (the latter originated at the Dominion Experimental Station, Kentville).

## Canadian Garden Service—1941

BY GORDON LINDSAY SMITH

Nothing is to be gained from working soil before it is ready. In fact with heavy ground, according to garden authorities, too early digging is about the worst possible thing one can do. Not only is it a messy job, in the first place, but the sticky clay is quite likely to bake later into hard lumps, suitable perhaps for temporary building material, but not for growing flowers and vegetables.

As a matter of fact gardening is not classed as heavy work, and certianly lifting mud is. One should curb the natural impulse to be out digging in early Spring and wait until the surface water has completely disappeared and one can walk and work in the garden without getting the shoes muddy. When the soil reaches this stage it is fit to work, and not before. Good garden soil in the right working condition crumbles and breaks into fine tiny pieces; it does not pack into lumps.

### DON'T PLANT TOO SOON.

This warning against working soil too soon also applies to planting. Many more flowers and vegetables are lost through planting too soon than too late, and in war time (specially we cannot afford such waste. There are, it is true, a few things that are not hurt by sowing early, plants that naturally reproduce themselves in Canada In this category will be onions, garden peas alyssum. All of these and some more will stand moderate frost and throughout most of Canada can be sown just as soon as the soil can be worked. But there are a great many more flowers and vegetables that will not survive frost. These must not be sown outside until the weather really turns warm. Actually they will not make any growth until the soil is arm, usually in mid-May or later. There is nothing to be gained by rushing them in too soon.

### SPREAD OUT SOWINGS

Experienced gardeners nowadays spread their sowing over two or three weeks. The old habit of putting in the whole garden on the Queen's Birthday was not a good one. Many things planted too soon and the entire garden going in at once resulted in the feast of fresh garden peas, corn, carrots, beans, etc., lasting only a few weeks also. A properly planted garden, with sowing spread from early Spring to early Summer, should provide a steady supply of the freshest garden vegetables from the first week in July until weeks after killing frost. This of course is a general statement and does not apply to those extra balmy areas of Southern British Columbia and Ontario where the first vegetables are ready in June.

### TO PREVENT JUNGLES

One can do wonders with flowers alone, but still more amazing results will follow where we combine flowers skilfully with grass, winding walks, shrubbery and bits of stonework. In this combining, however, we must take care to not reproduce a jungle. A little preliminary planning and a rough sketch drawn approximately to scale will help wonderfully. Flowers and shrubbery must not be so crowded that they become spindly and weak. There should be a generous foreground of good lawn.

Little flowers must not be hidden by tall things like full size marigolds, cosmos or zinnias. Beds must be so arranged that we can keep down weeds and remove fading foliage.


## LIME

Your government's agricultural department is strongly advocating the use of lime this season. Consult your agricultural representative concerning the application of lime to your soil.

There are many good reasons for this; you likely know them all and are planning to lime your farm this Spring. To avoid being disappointed in delivery, place your order now while "Brookville" High Grade Limestone is selling at the same low price as last fall Brookville agricultural Lime is the finest manufactured and will give early results. Consult any farmer who has used it. Regardless of increased production costs, there is no increase in price to you this spring.

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## TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming

Senator Pepper of Florida is agitating for equalization of exchange between Canadian and American money. His suggestions must have met with considerable backing as there has been quite a lot of activity in Canadian exchange particularly in New York recently. While this would benefit Canada in purchases of war materials from the United States, it would have a bad effect on exporters such as producers of potatoes, silver fox furs, lobsters and other Maritime products. They would receive 10 per cent less for their commodities.

Now it is the turn of the mink farmer to worry. His business has been built up on a one color type of fur, the principal use of which is confined to coats, and these if of good quality must be retailed between the $2.000 and $3.000 mark to give the mink rancher, dealer, manufacturer and retailer a decent profit. It takes a lot of salesmanship to sell a lady a coat at that price and buyers are few and far between who have sufficient of the wherewithal to purchase. This season mink has had a big decline notwithstanding other furs have advanced and the reason is the same old story—the law of supply and demand. The mink farmers are trying to figure out some way to cope with the difficulty. In the United States the breeders are figuring out an advertising campaign to make ladies mink conscious, and no doubt something will be done along the line of taxing the output of ranches in a co-operative way.

Miss Esther Lymon of Harper's Bazaar magazine gave a talk at the 1941 convention of the Mink Breeders' Association of the United States he'd a few weeks ago in Chicago, and among other things she said: "It stands to reason that women are not going to spend a thousand or two thousand dollars for a mink coat when a similar coat—as smart as the new muskrat —can be had for a half or quarter the price. Certainly she does not have to spend $1,000 or $1.500 to keep warm—and anyway warmth is not the question when a woman buys a mink coat. What actually makes a woman buy a mink coat rather than any other coat? The beauty of the skins, style. However, if through clever bending and working muskrat can be made so beautiful that it is hard to distinguish between it and mink that reason does not hold.—A mink skin is not worth a thing unless there is a demand for it and the demand is created solely by fashion. The mink skin takes on value only as it is made into something someone wants badly enough to spend perfectly good money for." Miss Lymon then goes on to give the ranchers a thorough scolding on the fact that they have not paid enough attention to the principles of advertising, designing and in every way publicising their product.

What is true of mink is equally true of silver fox although we are not in such a vulnerable position because we have all kinds of colors of silver fox and because it is a long-haired fur it is adaptable for trimmings and used in many ways that mink is not; but we should really all be contributing to some central advertising fund which would at certain seasons of the year carry through the newspapers of Canada style cuts and advertising suggestions for silver fox. Instead we leave it all to the retailer and often he advertises a very inferior product at a low price and that does the industry more harm than good.

It would pay us if we could buy up all the inferior skins, have them taken off the market and resold as other than silver fox. Perhaps this suggestion could be taken up by the Canadian National Silver Fox Breeders' Association, the Prince Edward Island Fur Pool, Ltd. Dominion Fur Sales, Ltd., and other organizations, with William Ritchie, chief grader at Ottawa for the Department of Agriculture, so that low grades would really be eliminated.

T. Lloyd Jones, Provincial Government Pathologist, was the guest speaker at the Alberta Silver Fox and Fur Breeders' Association March meeting. He gave very interesting data gathered from experiments he had carried out in the use of hormones injected into sexually sluggish foxes and mink. These injections, he said, gave definite results in pepping up the animals. His remarks created considerable interest and a discussion took place as to whether or not it would be advisable to keep for breeding purposes the offspring of artificially pepped up matings. Some were of the opinion the sexual sluggish traits of the pepped up animals would be handed down to their offspring. Dr. Jones would not commit himself definitely, stating that this can only be determined by future experiments.

In this Province quite a number of ranchers who received advice through Dr. Gunn of the Experimental Station, and Dr. Croken, used sexual hormones in the form of injections made into the muscular part of the hind legs of the male, and some used the hormones in tablet form. Some claim to have received considerable benefit. Foxes that had ceased mating were stimulated to renewed efforts and others who had gone through most of the season showing complete indifference, on treatment were converted into normal males. But a great number of those treated or dosed did not respond, so we can say from experience that sex hormone treatment is as yet only partially successful.

In the United States there is a breeder who claims to have great success treating female mink of non-mating propensities with a hormone made by Upjohns an American concern. His methods are fully explained in recent issues of American fox magazines.

Fromm Bros.' policy with regard to future disposal of their pedigreed fox pelts is given in a recent article which appears in several of the fox magazines. Briefly it is as follows.—The company has eliminated auction selling of its higher grades of silver fox. No travelling sales staff will be employed. A collection including coats, jackets and scarfs designed by Omar Kiam will be shown and sold only in the New York show room. Silver fox collars will be distributed through one or more cloth coat manufacturers. A total of about sixty stores through the United States will be licensed to distribute the Fromm garments as well as the fur trimmed coats containing Fromm silvers. Franchise holders are being selected on a one store in a city basis, except in the case of Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Cleveland where two retailers each have been appointed, and of New York where six establishments will carry the line.

A "Bright With Silver" label medallion and ribbon with pedigree number will be attached to every one of the Fromm fur products. As in the past consumers may exchange the medallion for the pedigree certificate of each pelt in the garment by sending the medallion to Fromm's, Wisconsin, headquarters. The firms original styles will be patented at Washington. A campaign of national advertising has been instituted and the firm will become a member of the Associated Fur Coat and Trimming Manufacturers, Inc.

In disclosing his firm's reasons for the sole handling of the Fromm finer quality furs from the breeding of pedigreed strains to the completion of the finished garment Mr. Fromm said: "In an auction everybody has to examine, shake, rub merchandise. Fine silver fox pelts are as delicate as fine silk and cannot stand such treatment. The truth is that the goods often suffer a 10 per cent depreciation simply in the process of going through the sale. Then too, the auction sale method makes it possible for our merchandise to get into anyone's hands and this may lead to misrepresentation and resultant loss of confidence in our product."

Now the ranchers are starting to look over their product and the little ones are being counted all over the Garden of the Gulf. We have heard of quite a number of ranchers that are having a pretty fine turnout. Some litters of eight are reported, a few sevens, plenty of sixes—also plenty of misses and smaller litters. We presume this has always been the way ever since the first foxes were kept in captivity. But really and truly from what we can learn the season is not going to show a big-as-usual increase. There were so many late matings and so many missed mating that a shortage is bound to occur even in the best regulated ranches. If this is general throughout Canada, which it may very well be, then it will be all to the good, because a shortage will mean enhanced prices right from the word Go next fall when buying starts. By that time every silver fox pelt now in dealers' hands will be cleaned up and the season will start off with a clean slate.

Everyone we talk to seems to have uppermost in their minds curiosity regarding their white fox matings. No doubt they do give us a gambling chance and contain more speculative sentiment than the regular types we have been raising so long That there will be joy in some cases—we hope in very many—is sure, and no doubt we will also have to meet disappointment. It could hardly be otherwise when two such distinct types are mated together. Anyhow we can look forward to one of the most interesting years in silver fox farming since the boom days of 1908 to 1914.

DRINKING WATER—Just because there is snow on the ground do not think that that makes it unnecessary to supply fresh clean water to the foxes daily. The snow which has been through the winter has been contaminated very much and if the fox uses it to relieve thirst, particularly the female fox, it may have a very untoward effect on the pups. The extra effort required to draw a few buckets of water and place it in pans daily will be well repaid in in healthier, better growing pups.

A rancher called us up this morning and asked if it would be safe to give ten drops of Humphrey's A. A. to a female fox each day for three days before whelping and continue three days after whelping with the object of preventing milk fever. He said two rancher friends had used it with good success. We told him to go right ahead, that there could be no possible harm in using Humphrey's as it was a homeopathic medicine and very reliable and we had used it in our stable for many years. It may be that the above remedy will fill a considerable want as many litters are lost through milk fever and other causes which are preventable through the use of a carminitive fever reducing preparation.

### BANANA CAKE

1-2 cup butter, 1 1-2 cups sugar, 2 eggs, slightly beaten, 1 cup bananas mashed, 1 teaspoon vanilla or lemon extract, or both. 2 cups flour, 1-2 teaspoon baking soda or 1 teaspoon of sour milk is used, 1-4 teaspoon salt, 1-2 cup milk, sweet or sour.

Cream butter, add sugar gradually. Add eggs and beat thoroughly. Add banana pulp and flavoring. Sift dry ingredients together and add alternately with milk.

Bake in moderate oven (350 deg F.) 20 to 30 minutes.

Keep Minard's in the home.