

Army Worms Are Invading Stroud, Ont.



Army worms, that hide by day and march by night have invaded the town of Stroud, Ont., and if not quickly destroyed will destroy all oat and barley fields in district. The only effective way to kill worms, seen here with Ruth Thompson of Toronto, is to spread poison mixture of bran, paris green, molasses and water over fields, thus killing pests when they attack heads of oat stalks.

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox and Mink Farming

A bill to reduce the excess tax on furs or abolish it altogether and to restrict importation of Russian furs, is being prepared by Mr. Mitvalsky of Iowa and will be sent to each representative of that state in congress. The promoter points out that in his opinion and in the opinion of others who have analyzed the situation it appears that the reduction of 10 per cent or the abolishment of the excise tax is the only solution to this problem. On the matter of restricting fur imports, Mr. Mitvalsky noted that "due to the spread of Communism in Europe, the market for American furs in the affected countries has been curtailed to negligible volume. In turn, Russia has taken the furs of those countries, along with their own, and dumped them on our markets to obtain the American dollar."

"It is obvious that the American fur ranchers, trappers and others of allied employment, with a curtailed market by reason of high excise tax are further injured by reason of this competitive supply of foreign goods. The Iowa legislators were also told that "as much as Soviet Russia is responsible for the curtailment of our markets in Europe, it appears only equitable to protect the American producer's livelihood by restricting the importation of furs from Communist controlled countries." Mr. Mitvalsky is an old-timer in the fur business, having completed a 47th year in Cedar Rapids as a collector of raw furs, manufacturer of fur garments and operator of retail stores in Waterloo, Davenport and Cedar Rapids.

Fromm Laboratories, Grafton, Wisconsin, will hold a field day on July 20th sponsored by the Laboratories and Federal Foods Inc., also owned by Fromm's. It will stress the practical application of latest methods for disease control, recent advances in fur and animal nutrition, physiology of reproduction and ranch management. Demonstrations begin at ten o'clock and inspection tours will take place in the afternoon. One of the trips will be through the newly equipped Federal Foods plant at Thiensville where new formulae for animal foods are being prepared. These are on the line of the pellets made by Master Feeds and similar types of meatless foods.

We learn on good authority that the terrific heat wave which caused so much loss to fruit and other crops in Ontario in June, also had a bad effect on fox ranches and mink ranches. Besides the loss of kits and pups due to the heat there are many cases of stunted growth. Just how this can be remedied we cannot say. It has been our experience that an early pup or fairly early pup, stunted during the period of growth, has a tough time making up for it that year.

Harry O. Covey who operates a fur farm in Washington, recently granted a judgment for \$8,125 against a truck company. He alleged that a number of his high-priced minks were lost because of a wheel of a truck owned by the defendant, came loose from a moving tanker and rolled through the pens. The truck was proceeding along the highway when it slipped and threw off its rear dual wheels which careened through the nearby Covey ranch. The five minks that were killed were of the Sapphit type which is now the most valuable.

Although the fur industry is going through its period of hard times yet every precaution should be taken to feed the foxes and mink properly and the importance of cleanliness in the care of these animals cannot be over-emphasized. Nowhere does the old saying—"a ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"—hold so true. In most cases it is much easier to prevent rather than cure diseases. Mink and fox are hearty, vigorous animals and are rarely sick if they have an adequate diet and healthy conditions in which to live. To facilitate the use of disinfectants it is important that all equipment and construction be designed from a labor-saving standpoint. If pens, kennels, feed houses and feeding equipment are complicated and unhandy in construction, application may become so difficult that even if the rancher has good intentions he will not carry them out. Cleaning, that is raking all refuse, should precede disinfection.

Ordinary cleaning and disinfecting of pens and sheds on a small ranch can be effectively and economically carried out by a weak solution of common lye. Cans usually contain about twelve or more ounces and if dissolved in a couple of gallons of boiling water and then

diluted to fifteen gallons will give enough solution to disinfect a small ranch. However, a larger area can be covered with second and third applications each a week or two. These lye solutions are excellent to cut grease or dirt and they partially dissolve and penetrate the fecal material.

There are certain disadvantages to the use of lye. Concentrated lye is a poison and also destructive to paints and clothing. It does not burn wood, iron or fox wire in the dilute concentration we recommend, and this dilute solution is not harmful to the animals in the amounts which might remain in the pens. The solution should not be left around where any animal can get a chance to drink it and care must be taken to get as little on the hands as possible and none on the face or in the eyes. The container in which the lye solution is held should be covered until the solution is all used the day it is being applied. Lye on exposure to the air soon loses its properties.

Many ranchers use steam under pressure to clean and disinfect their pens and equipment. The steam is applied by a steam jenny which uses oil for a source of fuel. These are somewhat difficult to obtain and we do not know of any part of this province where they are used. Another good disinfectant which has the advantage of keeping the ranch free from fleas is Cresol, or any cheap type of disinfectant. We have used it for years in the proportion of one part to forty warm water. It is particularly good for spraying fox houses and dens after refuse has been thoroughly removed. A good soaking with the solution will positively keep them free from fleas. After they have been sprayed it is a good idea to keep the covers open about two inches so that the warm air will dry up the inside of the house or den.

We make it a practice of using the Cresol disinfectant every time we clean out sheds and we have not had any fleas in our ranch for years. Just what this means can only be realized by those who have had to contend with a bad flea development which would require either dipping once or twice or powdering several times, and even then, disinfection should have to take place. It is for this reason we wish to thoroughly emphasize the importance of cleanliness and disinfection in every ranch.

Of special interest to fox farmers is the emphasis placed on long-haired furs by prominent fur dealers in the recent Paris openings. Mons. Dior, creator of the "New Look" is featuring fox. The Dior treatment called "Oursonne" is from the French word describing a fox, a fluffy deep pile of the young fur of a bear cub. Dior features the silver and blue fox while other fashion houses are putting the accent on black fox fur.

White mink is making a bid to replace ermine, according to an important buyer for a well-known Fifth Avenue fur salon. It lends itself to let-out wider stripes than ermine and is definitely more luxurious as an evening garment.

To take a census of fur seals on Alaska's Pribilof Islands every breeding place or rookery on the islands was photographed from a plane at 1,900 feet altitude. The fur seal herd numbers over 3,800,000 animals.

The effect of humidity on fur skins has never been determined by researchers but we fur farmers who have been in the industry for a long time can recall that in very dry falls and early winters the fur is more brittle and does not have the gloss or body shown where there is more humidity prevalent. In this country we have very little trouble about humidity. There is generally a good breeze or a cool atmosphere. It is different in other parts of Canada particularly in certain sections of the west. Low relative humidities tend to dehydrate the stock. This causes a brittle condition, more nervous temper, loss of weight and a larger percentage of damaged skins. Skins that have been dehydrated should not be kept in too dry an atmosphere. If so they tend to dehydrate and some artificial form of humidification should be used.

NEWSY NOTES -

By Agricola

**THE PHOEBE**

It is not easy to fix the status of this bird on P.E. Island. The 1916 list issued by the P.W. College says that the Phoebe is a rare summer resident. On the other hand a competent observer, Miss Maud Jones of Pownall, states that it has visited that region annually for more than twenty years. Mr. Wm. H. Moore, in his List (1928) refers to the Phoebe as "scarcely common" in New Brunswick. This tends to confirm Miss Jones' observations, for the straits are too narrow to be any obstacle to the bird, and the south side of the Island is most attractive to bird life. There is said to be no record for Nova Scotia.

"The Phoebe-bird," says Bain, "arrives with the Warblers, the first sunny days of June, and for three months afterwards makes the wild fells ring with its loud gurgulous cries of pewee, pewee, pewee." One wonders if Bain, careful observer though he was, had not mistaken the commoner Wood Pewee for the Phoebe? They are very similar in size, form and color — only the Pewee has white wing-bars, and the Phoebe has none.

Since the two birds are so much alike, it is lucky for the birdwatcher that the Phoebe has habits peculiar to itself. It is one of the tail-waggers whose action appears to be the effect of an over-excited brain. (The Pewee doesn't tail-wag.) In perching the Phoebe assumes a rather prim-looking, upright position. Another thing: its bill is black while all the other flycatchers have the lower mandible white or yellowish.

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BOY SAVED, PANTS SUFFER ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — (CP) — Bill St. Amant, 10, was thrown from his bicycle and rolled beneath the entire length of a car. But his only injury — apart from brush burns — was a huge tear on the heat of his pants.

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**TALLOW WHITEWASH**

Lime whitewash is in general use in those regions where British influence still prevails. There are two reasons for this: the lime is a cheap and effective preservative for woodwork, and at the same time imparts a color at once associated with purity and neatness.

Lime alone, however, is soon affected by change of weather. Hot sun makes it lose cohesion to the wood, and subsequent rain easily washes some of it off, so that in some cases, whitewashing may become an annual job. For this reason various fixatives have been mixed with the lime and have proved more or less useful. Of all the materials tried in Britain I found tallow to be the best fixative, but one must know the method of mixing, which after all, is very simple.

The lime is purchased as "quicklime" and must be "slaked." The lime is put into a barrel and just sufficient water is added to slake it. If too little water is used the lime is "scorched" and not all converted to hydrate. If too much water is added the slaking is only retarded. Scorched lime is lumpy and transparent, that is, watery.

We had occasion for some whitewashing recently, and secured good results from the following formula. One bushel (32 lbs.) of quicklime was placed in a barrel, and 12 gallons of water added. This set up a strong reaction — the slaking. While this was going on the barrel was covered with sackings to keep the heat in, and the lime was stirred a time or two. At the height of the slaking 5 lbs. of melted (fluid) tallow, and 5 lbs. of rough salt were put into the barrel. When the slaking ceased the lime and the tallow were completely emulsified, but somewhat thick. So 6 gallons of water were added to bring the whitewash to the right consistency. It was a great success. It spread just like paint and when dry would not rub off.

It was found that the water buckets varied in capacity, but the quantity of water was checked by

weight: one gallon of water weighs 10 lbs. If making tallow-whitewash for the first time, stick to the above formula, which was personally checked at every step.

**TWO POISONOUS BERRIES**

It is not generally known that two shrubs bearing berries, supposedly poisonous, are to be found in the Island. These are the Daphne Mezereum, usually referred to as the "Mezereum," and the Solanum Dulcamara, often called the "Bittersweet." Both are common in Nova Scotia, and also in the British Isles, but I have never heard of any fatality caused by them. This I attribute to the care taken to keep young children from eating berries at random. "Don't eat any wild berries unless I give the word" says the older child, and the caution at last becomes irradical to speak.

Both berries are red, egg-shaped (ovoid) and scarcely a centimetre long. The Bittersweet has a deep blue flower, something like a potato flower, but smaller and neater, and produces its berries in a loose cluster, while the Mezereum has its berries seated on its twigs in a kind of leafy "spike." The latter shrub is quite plentiful in certain districts, but no ill effects have ever come under my notice.

**THE LADY'S SLIPPER**

Of the five species of Lady's Slipper found in Canada, three are to be found in P.E. Island. The name of the genus is Cypripedium which must be translated as "Venus's Slipper," to be exact. The Cypripediums are orchids with peculiar flowers, the most conspicuous feature of which is the "lip," a large, inflated pouch or sac.

The Small Yellow Lady's Slipper is now looked upon as a variety of the British plant C. Calceolus, var. parviflorum. My only record of record of this plant is from Fort-une Bridge in 1935. The specimen was sent by Mr. E.S. Blanchard of Charlottetown. There is a good colored print of this orchid in "Canadian Nature" magazine for September 1942.

Our Provincial floral emblem, the Showy Lady's Slipper, has an alias or two when we come to the Latin. Botanist Miller calls it Chiracium, and most writers follow him. Botanist Salisbury says it is C. spectabile, which certainly means "showy." Another botanist calls our plant C. reginae and just at this point there seems to be a bit of a mix-up into which we need not venture. This plant (like the previous species) has a leafy stem which bears one or two flowers. The flowers are truly showy; the white sepals and petals contrast well against the large purple inflated lip. I have just discovered

that this plant was selected as the State emblem of Minnesota, long before it was thought of in P.E. Island.

The third of our Cypripediums, and the commonest, is C. acule, the stemless Lady's Slipper, or Moccasin Flower. Each flower grows on a single stalk, up to eight inches long, and without leaves. The flower is pink with darker veins, though I have found albedo forms, of pure white. A great distinction in this species is the fissured lip, which seems cleft down the front.

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