

Of Interest to Farmers

(Continued from Page Nine)

THE EXPERIMENTAL FARMS SYSTEM

Remark has several times been made in Parliament and elsewhere that the splendid work performed by the Experimental Farms System of Canada is not nearly so widely known and appreciated as it should be. In the Agricultural Gazette of Canada for January there appears an outline of the system and the tasks in which it is engaged. The Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa is the headquarters of the twenty branch or auxiliary farms and stations. It is stated that there is one farm in each of the provinces of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Ontario, two in Nova Scotia, four in Quebec, two in Manitoba, three in Saskatchewan, two in Alberta and four in British Columbia. There are also two substations in Alberta, two in the Yukon and one in British Columbia. In addition, working with the system are tobacco stations at Farnham, Que., and Harrow, Ont. At all of these experimental and research work of national importance is carried on. Eighty illustrations or demonstrations stations have also been established in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Each branch of agriculture is dealt with in actual experiment, and the results are made public through the press and by means of addresses, demonstrations and exhibits. In every effort is made to encourage, advance and benefit agriculture, the basic industry of the country.

with the taller growing grasses primarily looked upon as hay producers. Indeed, the experience of countries where the farms are small and where consequently the high cost of possible pastures are imperative to make farming a living proposition, strongly points to the advisability of including four or five or even more grasses in hay and pasture mixtures so as to make it the more remunerative.

PREFERABLE ROOT VARIETIES

Ever since the Experimental Farms System was inaugurated, experiments with field root varieties have been conducted on a large scale. An analysis of the results of the experiments during a large number of years is rather interesting. In the first place, it shows that it is impossible to draw any reliable conclusions from a few years' results only, a practice which unfortunately is often followed if applied to field roots. It will lead to unreliable deductions which cause either booming of mediocre varieties or misjudgment of desirable ones. Secondly, they show that, seen from the standpoint of nutrition, it does not necessarily follow that the varieties yielding the heaviest tonnage per acre are really producing the largest amount of food constituents per acre. Thus, there are varieties which regularly may be found to be heavy yielders but which, on account of a comparatively low dry matter content, may produce less actual food per acre than varieties which are yielding dry matter. Finally, the results of the experiments have demonstrated that although a variety may be found normally to be excellent in a certain part of the Dominion, it does not follow that it is equally as good or even desirable at all in other parts where climatic conditions are different. This is especially noticeable in certain mangel and swede turnip varieties characterized by a small top as are a large number of the varieties developed on the European continent. These varieties may produce heavy returns under conditions permitting of planting the rows close together, say 18 to 20 inches and they may also give heavy yields in districts where the moisture supply is abundant and the summer moderately hot. With wider planting between the rows and in districts where hot and somewhat prolonged dry periods generally occur, small-topped varieties are somewhat unreliable for the reason that the small foliage leaves the ground between the rows exposed to the drying out and heating action of the sun. This condition of the soil may cause the leaves to be burned off which in turn may prevent the crop from circumstances, target-topped varieties are to be preferred, especially in the interior sections of Canada; in the Maritime Provinces and on the Pacific Coast, the small-topped varieties so common on the European continent and sold to some extent in this country may be grown to advantage.

PREPARING THE HOTBED

The standard hotbed sash is three by six feet. It is customary to make a home garden hotbed with one, two or more sashes, according to size of bed desired. If a pit was not dug in the fall, select a well protected and thoroughly drained spot, and dig a pit 12 to 24 inches deep and a little larger than the bed is to be made. Commence digging as soon as the ground can be dug at all, even if some picking must be done. Throw the good top soil to one side and the bottom soil to the other side.

For a two-sash bed, about one good wagonload of fresh horse manure will be required. The manure should be thrown in a flat pile, inside, if possible, and the pile turned about twice at intervals of three or four days. As it is turned, the outer portion of the pile is thrown to the middle and the inner portion of the outside, in order to get uniform heating throughout. Then put the manure into the pit, each forkful being shaken to break it up, and spread it evenly. It should be well tramped. Put in a layer about three inches deep, then another layer, treading each in turn until the pit has been filled slightly higher than the level of the ground. In case the manure is very dry, a little water should be sprinkled over it as it is spread in the bed. It should be just moist enough to pack reasonably solid but springy under the feet.

The frame of the bed, made of wood, is then set on top of the manure and the earth from the bottom of the pit banked up outside of the frame to keep out the cold. The north side of the frame should be six inches higher than the south side. The good soil from the surface of the pit is spread on the packed manure. It is a good plan to mix a little well-rotted manure with this soil.

If a pit has not been made or cannot be dug conveniently, the manure may be placed on the surface of the ground to a depth of about two feet, taking care to have the pile larger on all sides than the frame. After putting the frame in place, bank the sides with more manure. Use good garden soil from some source for spreading on the manure.

Put on the sash and leave the bed to heat for several days. First the manure will become very hot, then after two or three days it will gradually cool. No seeds should be sown until the temperature of the soil has fallen below 85 degrees. Use a thermometer, the bulb of which is buried about three inches deep in the soil. Feeling the bed with the hand is not a reliable method of taking the temperature. When the temperature is moderate at 85 degrees or below, the seeds may be sown.—A. B. C.

MAKING GRAFTING WAX

Grafting wax, which is needed in spring by farmers and orchardists who wish to change the tops of rootless fruit trees into desirable ones, may be made by the following formula:—

Melt together until thoroughly mixed, four pounds of resin, two pounds of beeswax and one pound of tallow. Paraffin may be substituted for beeswax; it is cheaper but not so good, and pure lincseed oil may be used in place of tallow. Then pour the mixture into a vessel of cold water.

When the wax has partly cooled, work and gull like taffy until it becomes light and sooth. For this work, the hands should be greased with tallow. The wax may then be shaped into balls or sticks, and it will keep indefinitely in a cool place.

Some users prefer waxed cloth. Strips of muslin or old cotton or calico are dipped in wax and then rolled. Another way is to roll the uncut cloth on a stick and place in melted wax. When saturated, unroll on a bench and allow to cool. Then cut in strips to suit. These strips may again be rolled and kept for use as required.—A. B. C.

Managing Breeding Turkeys

The breeding stock, which naturally should have been selected last November, should be in prime breeding condition now. Fifteen turkey hens can be mated to one tom, but if twenty-five or thirty hens are kept, then one tom should be confined every other day. When only a few turkeys are kept they should be allowed free range and laying season. It is important to gather the eggs daily to prevent any from being chilled or destroyed.

Turkeys in good breeding condition are well fleshed but not fat and with free range conditions they should remain in good condition especially if given a daily feed of oats or heat or if there is not much natural food available. Early in the breeding season green food, such as turnips or mangolds, and animal food, such as beef scraps, can be added to the ration. The birds should have free access to grit and oyster shell.

Soon after mating, the hens begin to look for nesting places and laying usually begins about ten days after the first mating. One day is sufficient to fertilize the egg of one litter, which may consist of from twelve to thirty eggs. The eggs, which are gathered daily, should be kept in a cool temperature and turned every day. They should be incubated as fresh as possible, never more than two weeks old. Turkey and chicken eggs are used for incubation. If hens are being incubated under chicken hens the turkey may be broken from her broodiness when she had laid her first litter of eggs. Place in a slat-bottom coop for two or three days and feed her well. Turkey hens are really superior hatchers than chicken hens and they also make the best mothers. If the turkey hens are allowed to sit, their nests should be well protected. Place a coop or something over the nest so that the hen can come off or go on at will.

Lies annoy sitting hens very seriously or irritation.

CORNS

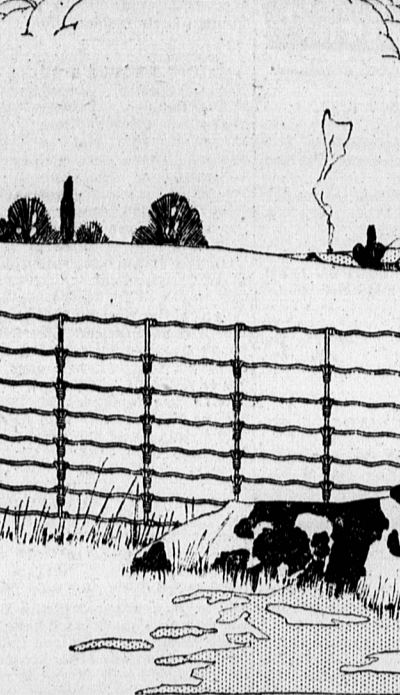
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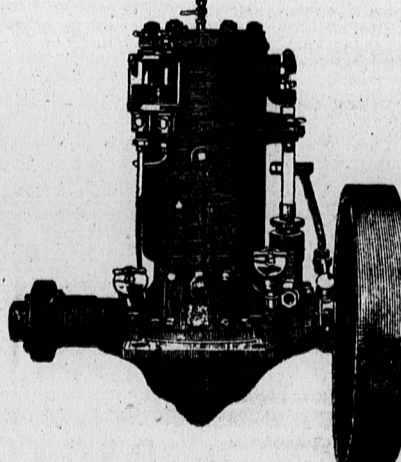
The best place to arrange the nest for a setting hen is as far as possible removed from the rest of the flock. Under no circumstances should the nest be placed where the other fowl can visit it and annoy the bird on the nest. The nest should be on the ground—right on the bare earth, if possible—in a place that can be kept dark and yet where light can be admitted during the time the clucker is feeling and exercising herself. The sides of the nest box should not be more than four inches high and it should be wide enough so that the hen can spread herself without any hindrance.

The best kind of a nest is one that makes it possible to fasten her in. Such a nest is easily made and is well worth the trouble of making. Nests of boxes of this kind were used for years and proved most satisfactory. Their construction will be best understood by reference to the plan shown. The original of the illustration measures fourteen inches each way, is bottomless and has a solid lid to cover over the top. The lid merely sits on the top, but might be hinged for convenience.

The hen is kept confined to the nest except at feeding time when the slatted door is opened to allow her to come out. Should she hesitate too long, the lid is removed and she is lifted off the eggs and put onto the floor, care being taken to spread her wings before lifting her so that there is no danger of breaking any eggs that might be concealed under them. The lid is replaced and the door closed during the time it is thought wise to keep her out. When three or four of these nests standing side by side, each of them in use, it was a great convenience to be able to close the fowl out and then afterwards to pen it, at a time and see that the hen returned to her own nest. Now is a good time to make the necessary number of nest boxes. At a later date there may not be time to do so.

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