A Page for the MODERN FARMER

- NEWSY NOTES -

By AGRICOLA

NOTES ON WINDSOR BEANS

Windsor Beans, often called Broad Beans in England, belong to the genus Faba, while the French or Haricot Beans are varieties of the genus Phaseolus. The latter has seeds of an elongated shape, thereby earning the name of Kidney Beans as well; but after noting that all Canadian garden beans are forms of the so-called French Beans, we may dismiss them for the present.

It has been stated by some of the older botanists that beans were brought into Britain during the Roman occupation of the Island; that the Romans had them from the Greeks along with other benefits, material and immaterial; and the Greeks in turn are supposed to have imported the original beans from Egypt, though the usual sources of evidence are silent on this point. It seems scarcely possible that Broad Beans have come by this route, for they are "as hard as nails," and may be planted as soon as the land can be worked, regardless of night frosts. Such an immunity to frost-bite would show that this bean is a native of central, rather than sub-tropical, Europe.

Broad Beans appear in authentic history in two forms of the same species; just as the human race may be divided into different types of homo sapiens.

The Field Bean differs principally in the seed being smaller, and its coat a deeper brown at maturity. This is the kind mentioned by Cambell in his 'Political Survey," published in 1774: he says that "field beans are exported for the food of the negroes in our plantations, and are employed in feeding horses at home; so that altogether they are in daily use, and most certainly turn to a considerable amount." Another writer, at the same date, says that the annual consumption of field beans was four million bushels; and this vast quantity was grown mainly in South-eastern England. How the negroes made use of them is not divulged, but dried broad beans are never used as human food in Britain. When fed to horses they were "cracked" first, and then mixed with oats in certain proportions: this diet was generally reserved for horses that were at hard work, and required strong rations. Now my readers will understand why "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," fed his horse on corn (oats) and beans, in the old song. Such beans were also given to pigs in the fattening pen.

The Garden Bean is the Broad Bean I had in mind when beginning this note. Pratically all the difference betwen it and the field bean is that its seeds are larger. A minor difference is that some strains of Broad Beans have white-skinned seeds while others have green-skinned seeds; but the seeds of both oxidize and turn brown very soon after being "shelled," which somewhat spoils their appearance for market. A field of beans in flower is not only a pretty sight, but the perfume given off is very agreeable. The flower is, of course, of the leguminous type, and is white in color with a black spot on the wings; and the black is a real black, not a maroon nor a deep violet: in fact there is nothing to equal it in plant life, I imagine.

Sir Humphrey Davy once analysed the flour made from beans of this species and found that one thousand parts of flour yielded 570 parts of nutritive matter, of which 426 were mucilage and starch, 103 gluten, and 41 extract. It was his opinion, based on these findings, that the flour of beans was more nutritious than that of oats, but was not as digestible. The usual way, however, of preparing broad beans for food is not by milling, but by simply boiling the seeds till they are tender: in that state they usually accompanied boiled ham to the table. Not everybody likes broad beans at first; a small minority must acquire the taste for them, and a still smaller minority reject them altogether. Those who acquire the taste, like most converts are apt to overdo it. I know of a case where a youth, after several helpings of broad beans, developed a severe case of colic. Beans are a grand food, but "strong".

As far as I can gather Broad Beans are not often grown in this country, partly (I think) because of the drier climate, and partly because of insect pests. The seeds must be planted early, as already stated, about four inches apart and not less than two inches deep; if more than one row is grown the rows must be three feet apart. When the sappy young plants appear above ground they quickly attract the attention of the cutworms who are very fond of them. In a garden one may counter the cutworms by encircling the plants with "half-cans" for a time: that is, salmon or other cans cut down. These must be taken off the plant when the stems get hard. Pretty soon the plant will make "suckers" at the base of the stem; and it is good practice to remove these: so say the English gardeners. If the summer should be dry another insect enemy is the fore: the ants will tap the stems at ground level, to drink the juice. As a deterrice forms, the stem is tapped at a different place every day till it may be girdled. Bad enough; but the ants have habit even worse: they carry green aphids and pasture them on the roots of the beans and they carry black aphids to the succulent young growth at the summit. When the first sign of the "black dolphin" (aphis) appears, the English cottager snips off three inches or so, from the top of his broad beans, knowing that the tougher stems below are not as attractive to the pest. A good top-dressing with a liberal quantity of wood ashes will discourage the root pests and invigorate the beans.

It is many years since I bought the Broad Bean seed, and they appeared to be very mixed "parentage." Most of the pods contained one or two beans, and a very few had three seeds. Only the "threes" were saved for seed and the process was continued till three became the normal number in the pod. Ten or eleven years on to that have made four beans in the pod quite common, with nature sporting a "five' sometimes: but a check to the growth of the plant or a bad season may cause a throwback to a lower number. There is a parable in that if one only had enough imagination to give it form.

I have gone rather closely into the culture of the Broad Bean, because, first it is a nutritious and tasty food; and second, because I hope to have a little, a very little, high class seed to give away in the fall. So preserve this note, if you are interested.

NOTES ON ISLAND PLANTS
The Cucurbitaceae.

This Family takes its name from Cucurbita, an old Latin name for a cucumber or some sort of a gourd. Strictly speaking this is not a cucumber country, for, although we can grow them easily enough in our summer season, their seeds cannot stand our winter, and must be kept in a frost-proof place till next planting time. Our Balsam Apple or Wild Cucumber, **Echinocystis lobata,** the only one of the family claimed as naturalized, has no such failing, but seems originally to have escaped from some garden, and to have reproduced itself by self-sown seeds. The plant is exuberant in growth when given the advantage of rich moist soil, and is often used for covering trellis, arbors, and similar structures. The hard flat seeds were strung together for beads by the American Indians. The plant itself was known to the Omahas as "Watangtha," which means the "Ghost melon."

The Campanulaceae

The wonderfully numerous "Bluebell family" has, strange to say, but one representative in this Province; the Creeping Bellflower, **Campanula rapunculoides.** It was found by Prof. Herbert Groh, when he made a Weed Survey of the Island in 1926. It is the rootstock that does the creeping, by means of subterranean stolons. The rather slender stem may reach a height of two feet and bears a one-sided (secund) raceme of large bright blue flowers, the lowest of which opens first. (It is necessary to notice this as some species are very similar in appearance, but the topmost flower opens first). The home of this bellflower was originally in western Siberia.

KERGUELEN ISLAND

If you take a map of the world and examine the space between the southern tip of Africa and the south polar regions, you will find several groups of islands forming an irregular chain. These are Prince Edward Island, with its companion Marion Is.; Crozet Is.; Amsterdam Is.; and St. Paul Is. Below Amsterdam Is., lies Kerguelen Is., and still further south McDonald Is. Most of these are included in the British Empire, though it is probable that they have no permanent inhabitants. Admiralty and other soundings have proved that below these islands lies a high submarine plateau, of which the islands themselves are the higher peaks, that have escaped the general subsidence at some prehistoric date. Proof of this is to be found in the similarity in the flora and fauna of the islands; and it is remarkable that their vegetation has an affinity with that of Africa, as Sir J. D. Hooker long ago pointed out: if anything it resembles that of South America!

Kerguelen Island has many remains of petrified forests, mute evidence of a warmer climate than it now possesses. It is plainly volcanic in its origin, and indeed an active crater and some hot springs are said to exist on the south-west of the island. But the climate is not now favorable to permanent vegetation and Kerguelen, when first discovered (1772 was given the alternative name of Desolation Island, by which it is still occassionally known. It lies within the belt of a constant "rainy season"; it has no drying winds, and its temperature is kept down by the presence of a vast expanse of sea and the cold Antarctic drift. Tempests and squalls are frequent, and the weather is rarely calm. With all there disadvantages, Sir J. D. Hooker found twenty-seven species of flowering plants, and perhaps two hundred species of ferns, mosses, and lichens, maintaining themselves on "Desolation Island." Bird life, being undisturbed by animals or humans, abound; and some of the species are said to be peculiar to the island. There are many forms of insect life, but the only animals able to maintain themselves, are marine, such as seals, sea leopards and sea elephants. It is doubtful whether these animals exist in any number now, since the island is a resort of the whalers, a notoriously destructive folk. These visit the island to renew their water supply from its springs and to procure the Kerguelen Island Cabbage. (Pringlea antiscorbutica) whose specific name commemorates its use against that old-time scourge of the mariner scurvy. This plant looks like a garden cabbage and is found in no other part of the world.

The island is of fair size, 83 miles long and 79 broad at its widest part. Many shipwrecks have occurred in this region and sometimes sailors have been forced to winter on this inhospitable land. I hope to refer to the narrative of such a castaway shortly.

NEWSY NATURE NOTES

By Stuart F. Thompson

"IN CLOVER"

"Now, we are in clover.' Wherever this saying may have come from, there never was a time when it was more true than these midsummer days of July.

When we think of clover, our minds recall a tumble little plant with its head of florets and the three-fold arrangement of leaflets and perhaps, the strange whimsical superstition of the four-leafed clover which has caused many a childish search for this symbol of good luck. Little do the happy finders realize that this much-sought-for trophy is really a freak of nature, for the authentic clover is so obviously divided into three that it has become an emblem of the Trinity.

It is said that when Saint Patrick visited Ireland he was once pressed to explain his doctrine of the Trinity. Stooping down he picked a leaf from a plant at his feet and held it up. It is generally believed that this plant was a shamrock, and ever since we have had the three-leafed shamrock as the emblem of the Emerald Isle. I suppose had it happened that the good saint had found at his feet a clover plant and held its leaf aloft, then the country's emblem would have been the clover—with equal significance.

There are in Canada many species of clover. The best known is perhaps the beautiful red clover. Whole acres are grown for fodder, so that its large purple, rather than red, flowers and ample foliage is a common sight throughout the country.

Another common variety is alsike clover. Like red, it is cultivated extensively, but can be easily distinguished from red by its rose-tinted flowers. Alsike is the most fragrant of the family. I recall one summer day driving along a road with an outdoor friend. Suddenly he exclaimed "smell the alsike," and at that moment across the road from a nearby field came rich sweet fragrance of this clover as it might be a warm wholesome breath of a summer day.

Then there is white clover—a low pretty little plant with its white head—differing from the others in having its head of flowers on a separate stem instead of a leafy one.

Two varieties of clover are known as hop clovers, and though they grow much the same as the others, their yellow flowers at once distinguish them.

But these are all summer clovers. In September, on the hillsides and sandy glades is a low variety. It has no bright colors, but its trifoliate leaves at once mark it as a variety. Its most conspicuous characteristic is the woolly flowerheads which look like nothing so much as a rabbit's foot. Hence the apt name, rabbit's foot clover.

And of course we ought to mention the sweet clovers, both white and yellow, those lofty weeds which grow so densely in neglected fields. Though they are not really true clovers, we can at once see the family resemblance. There was a time not so long ago when the sweet clovers were considered bad weeds, but now are valued as ensilage and harvested as such. Would that we could find such important use for all the luxuriant weeds which so abundantly encumber the land.

Whether red, white, alsike, hop, rabbit's foot, or the so-called sweet clover, all have the same style of flowering; a head of tiny irregular florets and the wellknown distinctive arrangement of three leaflets on the stem. So it was by the merest chance that good Saint Patrick plucked and lifted up to fame the insignificant little-known shamrock, instead of the useful extensive family which we now know as the clovers.

C. N. R. REVENUES

MONTREAL, Que., July 16. —The gross revenues for the all inclusive Canadian National Railways for the week ending July 14th, 1941, were $5,543,909 as compared with $5,494,501 for the same week of 1940. An inchease of $49,408 or one per cent

LONDON—(CP—The government has appealed to country women to take surplus fruit to jam making centres rather than allow it to rot in the fields because of insufficient sugar to preserve it.

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming

Figs are very extensively and cheaply grown in California and have been highly recommended as an adjunct to the diet of silver foxes. In certain parts of Russia during the hot months dried figs sometimes form the complete diet, so an experiment was undertaken to see whether a fox could live on a diet of figs. For test purposes a polygamous male fox was fed 100 per cent ration of dried figs for a period of several months during which period he grew a decent coat of fur and later during the same test period mated and produced pups. If we could buy figs as cheaply as our American neighbors they would certainly be a good addition to the foxes' diet.

Quite a controversy has been going on as to whether the testing of the sperm of a male with the microscope truly indicates potency or impotency. Dr. Seth Osborne of Minnesota is of the opinion that the reason for finding dead sperm in the female may be due to an acid condition which will kill the sperm rapidly.

A great many doctors who have studied the causes of barrenness in humans put it down to acidity and give a treatment of injections of a solution of bicarbonate of soda. We understand experiments along this line have been carried out with valuable foxes with the result that they bred and produced litters.

Frank Gauthier, whose mink are considered among the tops in the United States for pelt values or show purposes, is of the opinion that too much ground green bone in the ration during the gestation period is liable to produce oversize kits making whelping very difficult. This may be true in some fox ranches as well where large quantities of bone are fed, but in this province where most of the meats are cold storage it is not likely to be the case

Recent surveys of the fur industry in the United States show that there were 272,527 silver foxes produced during 1940. It is estimated that the production of silver foxes in Canada was in the vicinity of 160,000.

Dr. Gassner of the Colorado Agricultural College addressed a meeting of fur breeders in Denver recently, his subject being, "Loss of Pups at Birth," in which facts were brought out that marked a long step towards clarification of the subject. These facts were—that the primary cause for loss of pups at birth or a few days afterwards is due to a toxic condition of the female developed during pregnancy and reaching its climax at whelping. It further appears that this toxemia is developed primarily through faulty elimination. Some facts brought out indicated clearly that faulty elimination had been carried to the point of rather acute constipation. It is easy to see that this acute condition might readily result in toxemia in the pups before birth and toxic milk in the vixen, either of which might be fatal to the pups, and if both there would be a very slim chance for the pups to survive. Further steps were brought out that gave reason to substantiate this conclusion, namely; certain vixens whelping towards the last end of the season on some ranches where the losses have been heavy were administered a laxative oil and put on a laxative diet prior to whelping and these vixens came through with normal litters.

Dr. Gassner pointed out that final conclusions cannot be arrived at until another breeding season. It appears, however, to be a nutritional problem where ingredients in the ration may be so seriously unplaced in ratio that the result is faulty elimination in varying degrees. It does not appear that pup losses were greater from proven breeders than from pup vixens. The suggestion was offered that fur farmers should see to it that vixens during pregnancy be fed a ration that promotes free and normal elimination. This is just plain common sense. A more simplified diet in feeding would be better. Many diets are entirely too complex, with the net result—confusion.

Dr. Carleton Deederer of Miami, Florida, writing in the Medical World, states that human grey hair can be restored to black or natural color The treatment consists in taking adequate daily amounts of shark oil which is very rich in vitamin A. The Doctor found that lack of vitamin A was found to be associated with grey hair in every case studied. Sometimes the reserve of vitamin A is depleted due to infections. When such is the case the administration of shark oil removes the cause. The test was made with a vitamin A scope in the following manner—A person's vision was exposed to a bright light and the time taken for the vision to return to normal after shutting off the bright light exposure compared with that of normal vision which would be about four seconds. In severe cases of lack of vitamin A it took thirty seconds. After the degree of efficiency had been determined proper dosages of the oil were administered.

The above may not interest us because we are not looking for black on our silver foxes particularly, but there is no question that a deficiency of vitamin A leads to serious trouble with silver foxes such as inflammation of the eyes, nervous twitching of the head and other manifestations. We think the first indications of such a deficiency are few in this province, but it would be well to look out for them and if they appear one would have to feed cod liver oil, potent in vitamin A, vegetables such as carrots and other vitamin A factors.

Last winter we remember reading where a lady doctor in California had carried out experiments with foxes in which she deprived them of vitamin B with the result that they showed no dark characteristics, in fact were of a platinum type. It was therefore admitted that vitamin B was the factor controlling grey hair. Probably both vitamins have something to do with it, or it may be a case of scientists just jumping at conclusions.

D. Gantenbein and Sons operate a muskrat farm near Reading, Minnesota, and are suing the United States in the Federal court for $200,000 damages because they claim that the government lock and gate near Redwing has virtually ruined their adjoining property and they are appealing the award of an appraisal commission in a condemnation suit before the United States district court.

At the annual meeting of the Mink Breeders Association of the United States held in Chicago, a discussion took the lines of holding down production. It was stated that the one thing which gives value to mink is the exclusiveness of the article. If this is disturbed by overproduction the value will be lowered to an unpredictable point. That is what happened to silver fox. Therefore the expansion of the mink industry should be in the production of better average quality instead of in the production of greater numbers of pelts The higher production of mediocre pelts by the industry creates a factor of self destruction.

What is true of mink is true of silver fox breeding. We should endeavor to improve our herds rather than to expand production. The next few years are going to be very critical ones and it would be unreasonable to expect that they would be very highly profitable ones. Each and everyone of us should endeavor to cull out our poorer grades, keeping the idea of improvement ever before our minds so that when normal times come back we will have a good herd to expand with if expansion seems the proper thing.

Omar Brager-Larsen of Norway, who introduced Norwegian platinum foxes to the United States, is planning to become a citizen of the U. S. A. He will be a valuable citizen to acquire as he has what it takes to make fox pelts famous.

Fur of Canada, published in Winnipeg, June number, has just come to hand. It is the annual breeders number and is a credit to the publishers. There is a splendid article by Dr. R. H. MacDonald giving advice to platinum breeders, an article on Deficiency Diseases of Foxes Produced by Feeding Fish. We believe the fish referred to is fresh fish and the deficiency is repaired by feeding vitamin B contained in Brewers yeast. The disease is known as Chastek paralysis and is manifested by total or partial loss of use of hind legs—Market Requirements of Mink—Mink Men Hear the Call to Arms—Modern Fox Mutations, by

DE-LOUSE FOXES With
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• DUST ON ONE SPOT •

Bert Avery, a synopsis of which was given in these columns a few weeks ago — Breeder Organization and Ranch Management — Points a Platinum Breeder should Consider—Vitamin A Deficiency in Silver Foxes—Fur Farm Organization Work in Manitoba — Mink Problems — are some of the leading articles in this fine publication. There are many good cuts of foxes, mostly whiteface, platinum types and advertisements by the leading breeders of these new crosses, among them our friend A. K. "Ollie" McNeill. Fur of Canada address is McIntyre Building, Winnipeg.

During the last few days we met a number of ranchers who wore a very happy expression. They were customers of the P. E. I. Fur Pool Ltd., Summerside, and had received checks from that organization signed by Peter G. Clark, its President, we understand the payments were for pelts shipped to London, returns of which recently came through although the goods were disposed of sometime ago. Some checks that landed in the vicinity of Charlottetown showed individual pelts sold for over $80. Nice work Peter!

Congratulations to George A. Calbeck on the showing made by his three year old pacer Jack Clyde, who furnished one of the biggest surprises of the Kensington race meet Wednesday when he romped home the first heat in 2.24½, which incidentally places him in the standard list for pacers. No one had any idea that this beautiful young pacer could tramp in anything like that notch. He received all his training and was driven by owner George.

SPRINGFIELD W. I.

The June meeting of the Springfield W. I. was held at the home of Mrs. Clarence Haslam. The president, Mrs. A. Hughes presided and opened the meeting with the Club Woman's Creed. Roll call was answered by 18 members passing in blocks for a refugee quilt, and there were three visitors present. Minutes of previous meeting were read and adopted.

Report of District Nurses' visit to the school was read also correspondence from Empire Tea Co and Institute Dept. It was decided to send for some recipe books and Mrs. F. W. E. Haslam and Mrs. N. J. Sinclair were appointed delegates to the annual meeting.

After some discussion it was decided to purchase material for quilts, etc., and Mrs. George Haslam invited the members to meet at her home for a quilting the following Wednesday.

Tea committee, Hostess, Mrs. F. W. E. Haslam, Mrs. R. E. Howard and Mrs. Irving Haslam.

Mrs. Ernest Haslam invited the Institute for July meeting. Program committee, Mrs. Ernest Haslam and Mrs. Dunning. Refreshment committee, Hostess Mrs. J. B. MacKay and Mrs. Walter MacKenzie. Roll call, A book I have read from the Carnegie Library."

Program consisted of contest put on by Mrs. Hughes and prize won by Mrs. George Haslam and Mrs. Ernest Haslam.

Meeting closed with National Anthem and lunch was served by those in charge.

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CONSERVATION

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

WOODCOCK

Numerically, woodcock hunters are far below those who hunt for ducks and geese. This is fortunate, as the 'timber doodle," like other shorebirds, is single-brooded, nests on the ground, and lays only four eggs. Its nesting preferences subject it to many natural enemies and to the vagaries of weather conditions. It has a somewhat limited range, chiefly east of the Mississippi River. Although known to breed in Louisiana and other southen States, most of the birds are produced on nesting grounds in Pennsylvania, New York, New England and the Maritime Provinces. It is an anomaly of distribution, probably not generally known, that during the winter months this species is heavily concentrated in Louisiana and western Mississippi. A few may be found at that season also in Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, and even as far north as the Potomac River, but probably as much as 75 percent of the population is concentrated in the lower Mississippi Valley. The situation is parallel to that of the blue goose, and Louisiana is the custodian of both these valuable species in winter.

The fall flight of woodcock, in 199, was good and it appeared that the supply of birds was up to, or even above, the average for the past few years. Then came the abnormal weather conditions of January 1940, with snow and freezing weather extending deep into the South, even to the Gulf coast. In southern Louisiana the ground was reported frozen in many places to a depth of 3 inches, and this condition persisted for 10 days or longer. For a bird that obtains its food by probing in soft ground these conditions could only prove disastrous. Unfortunately, this occurred at the time of the open season in that State, January 1 to 31. As a result, in addition to untold numbers of birds that unquestionably died of starvation, hundreds were killed in bag limits by hunters. When they learned of the condition of the birds, many sportsmen refrained from further shooting, but many others, disregarding the ethics of sportsmanship, continued day after day to shoot the weakened birds. While Federal game-management personnel was not adequate to cover the entire area, biologists of the Survey, game management agents, and the regional director concentrated their activities in Louisiana. Very little of the killing was found to be illegal, although reports were received that the birds were being sold on the streets.

It was obvious, however, that the loss was very heavy, and as the northward migration got under way all field personnel of the Bureau were instructed to maintain a close watch and to report their findings. Reports to the number of 72 were received from the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways. Only 9 of the observers could detect any increase over the spring flight of 1939, while 29 reported decreases, usually heavy. The remaining 34 observers could detect no change but, significantly, most of them are situated in areas where the species is never common.

Particularly important are the May reports from the cooperative research stations in Pennsylvania and Maine, where the woodcock is a major subject of investigation. The breeding grounds studied by these units showed decreases of 40 and 37.5 percent, respectively, under the populations of 1939. The biologist of the Atlantic Flyway, working in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, reported a somewhat reduced population in that important breeding district.

In a few areas, notably in New York, reports were received of normal numbers of woodcock. It cannot be denied, however, that the 1940 breeding population of this species has been reduced through a combination of hunting and abnormal weather conditions.

(To Be Continued)

Haying and Spraying

The prospects of good crops and HIGH PRICES are better than for many years and the question of help, on account of the war, is becoming acute. The farmer, therefore should pay particular attention to his farm implements this year. For those who have a B Tractor we have a mounted mower which merits inspection. For those who use horses we have a few reconditioned mowers in excellent condition. Also a few new 9 ft. & 10 ft. rakes at attractive prices.

Our line of new sprayers consists of 200 gal. 6 row; 100 gal. 4 and 6 row at last year's prices.

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BRINGING UP FATHER — By George McManus

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