



Woodpecker Value Found In Curbing Insect Damage

In spite of what you occasionally hear to the contrary, woodpeckers are good friends of the farmer, gardener and forest owner; they help control damaging insects and harmful larvae. True they drill holes into the bark and wood deep enough to reach the larvae but we forget that if the peckers did not eat the grubs the latter would do tremendous damage and often make even larger cavities than the bird's riveting. The woodpecker family is a large one, spread from coast to coast. The yellow-bellied sap-sucker admittedly does some damage; but the others, the handsome pileated, ivory-billed downy, are definitely beneficial.

The sprightly downy is a well-known visitor and is often seen by citizens who maintain bird feeding stations during the winter. Of all the woodpeckers this smallest member of the clan is the universal favorite. He is a handsome little fellow in an impeccable black and white suit. Grey day or bright, his disposition maintains an even keel; on a below-zero day he alternates time at the feeder with industrious searching of tree bark and crevices. It's an appealing sight to watch him hold his head sideways for a moment and then tap smartly on the bark and get his prey.

Looking 'em over. G. C. Warren, horticulturist, Arthur MacRae, farmer, W. H. Heeney, president of P. E. I. Frosted Foods Ltd., and E. C. Parent, superintendent Experimental Farm, examining pea varieties, in farm plots, for type and maturity. At the right J. D. E. Sterling, cerealist and F. M. Cannon, entomologist, releasing incubated barley joint worm flies in field cage to test the resistance of breeding lines. Outdoors and indoors there is a constant scientific battle being waged to produce quality disease resisting crops.

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One of the most important causes of reduced grade quality of potatoes on the Canadian market arises from mechanical handling at harvest time. Up to 70 per cent of the grade defects in potatoes reaching the consumer may be traced to mechanical injury.

Recent experiments at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, showed that injury in the field during harvest could be reduced to 15 per cent or less when potatoes were mature and equipment was operated properly. But injury may be 15-30 per cent when the machinery and equipment are not carefully operated.

To keep the mechanical injury to a minimum, the following precautions are suggested:

- (a) Operate the blade of the digger deep enough to prevent rutting the tubers.
- (b) Maintain tractor speed at half throttle in low gear and retain a soil cushion on the elevator chain.
- (c) Pad sharp pieces on the digger and pad the wagon or truck platform used to haul the potatoes.
- (d) Use picking baskets that do not damage the potatoes.

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