

Agricultural News

P. E. I. Department of Agriculture
PLANT FOOD AND SOIL FERTILITY

Plants in their normal development take from the soil the following elements: nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur, potassium, calcium and magnesium in considerable quantities and smaller amounts of iron, aluminium, manganese, sodium, chlorine, silicon, copper, zinc, boron, cobalt and molybdenum. It is possible that some of these elements, such as chlorine, silicon, aluminium, iodine, cobalt and sodium are not essential for plant growth even though taken up by the plant. In addition, plants utilize hydrogen and oxygen in the water absorbed and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Of the elements of plant food derived from the soil, those that most frequently tend to become deficient in an available form, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. These three are commonly known as the major elements of fertility. Their available stores are quickly depleted by cropping and therefore they must be retained in the soil or be maintained or increased. All of these major elements of fertility are necessary for the growth of the plant. If one is deficient, crop growth will be restricted by the limited supply of that element, although the others may be present in ample amounts for maximum production. In other words, there may be present in the soil all the phosphorus and potassium that the plant can utilize, but if only very small amounts of available nitrogen are present, good yields cannot be obtained until the deficiency in nitrogen has been overcome.

FUNCTIONS

Nitrogen promotes particularly the development of stem and leaf and is demanded largely during the earlier weeks of growth. Too little nitrogen results in stunted growth with yellowish foliage; too much nitrogen may induce rank growth, delay seed formation and ripening, tend to make plants subject to disease, and cause lodging of grain crops.

Phosphorus or "super" stimulates root growth in the early stages of growth. Its importance for turnips and grain crops may thus be explained. It promotes fruitfulness and, in some measure, hastens maturity, and is therefore especially important when early ripening of the crop is required.

Potassium or Potash is essential to the formation of the starches of fruits and vegetables, and the fibrous matter of plants. It also aids in the formation of the protein and in the production of well-developed grain in cereals. It promotes a good growth of wheat crops particularly in winter. Ample supply of available potassium in the soil helps to prevent disease and to lessen the effect of excessive nitrogen.

Calcium (Lime) — In ordinary farm practice calcium is supplied to the soil in the form of materials (ground limestone, marl, shell muds), most complete fertilizers, superphosphate and cyanamid. The indirect effects of certain calcium compounds are, however, of prime importance and it has been found necessary with many soils to apply "liming materials" in order to reduce soil acidity, improve tilth and beneficially influence the availability of other plant food elements.

Soils may contain too high a percentage of calcium, particularly as carbonate, for the healthy development of some plants. Occasionally on such soils, plants suffer from "chlorosis," a physiological condition apparently due to a deficiency of iron or manganese. It appears that where much carbonate of lime exists in the soil, it may render the absorption of manganese compounds difficult to the plant. Iron, on the other hand, is taken up by the plant under these conditions but appears to be held in an unavailable form within the tissues.

Magnesium — Magnesium is a necessary constituent of plants and is, therefore, of importance in soils. Usually the latter are sufficiently well supplied with this element; but it has been found in some districts that certain crops, for example potatoes, do not thrive to best advantage unless the soil has been given a small application of compounds containing magnesium, such as ground dolomite (magnesium limestone). Symptoms of magnesium deficiency have been observed in certain orchards and these can be temporarily corrected fairly quickly by spraying the trees with a solution of a magnesium salt. Applications of magnesium compounds to the soil act somewhat more slowly in correcting this deficiency in orchards.

Boron — Boron is essential for the healthy growth of many plants, but the amount required is very small. Certain physiological disorders such as brown-heart of turnips, crown rot of sugar beets and mangels, browning of cauliflower, cork disorders of apples,

splitting of celery and yellowing of alfalfa can generally be materially lessened and sometimes completely eliminated by the application of boron to the soil, preferably in the form of borax at 10 to 20 pounds per acre. These amounts contain, approximately, from 1 to 2 pounds of available boron. Frequently, boron deficiency can be controlled by spraying with boron compounds.

CLEANLINESS FOR HEALTH

Wherever poultry is being raised there is always the continual danger from an outbreak of some disease, so that it becomes necessary for the poultryman to be on continual guard against any disease outbreak. It is true there is less danger from certain disease when the ground is covered with snow, nevertheless, the danger of a disease outbreak is much greater when the ground is wet and muddy, as it frequently is around our Prince Edward Island farms during the brooding season.

Disease troubles to which poultry are subject seem to be almost cyclical. These are somewhat seasonal; so that one may, to some extent at least, prepare in advance to combat them. Other diseases make their appearances unexpectedly but they can be prevented or held in check by proper precautions taken. "Cleanliness is Health Insurance." This means clean roosts, clean dropping boards, clean floors, clean litter, clean nests, clean food and water, clean drinking vessels, and food hoppers and a clean attendant. Prevention rather than cure is the satisfactory procedure. The poultryman who is efficient in the practice of sanitation will have little trouble from disease. The body of the normal bird is well protected against disease but adverse conditions lower the natural resistance and disease becomes established.

Sanitation must begin with the young stock. Chicks from disease-free parents have a better chance, provided they have been properly incubated. Blood-testing of the breeding flock and removal of the reactors has greatly lessened the trouble from pullorum.

Before placing chicks or poulters in the brooder house, it should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with a good germicide and kept clean. Proper ventilation and freedom from draughts are essential, since chilling or over-heating of chicks will start diarrhoea or aggravate the condition if already established. Over-crowding, irregular or improper feeding, dirty feed and water vessels, or mixing of various ages may be contributory causes. Young stock should not be allowed to run with mature birds. Never mix turkeys and chickens.

The use of disinfectant mats have been found to be a good safety precaution. The mat is placed just inside the brooder house door (do not allow chicks access to it). The mat can be made from old feed sacks soaked in a good disinfectant. When the poultryman enters the brooder house, he disinfects his feet on this mat before walking among the chicks. Some poultrymen prefer to have an extra pair of rubbers which they leave inside the brooder house and when entering the house they pull them on over their boots.

On farms where the same person is looking after both adult birds and young chicks he should plan his work routine so that "he goes from the chicks to the adult birds" and not from the older stock to the young chicks. In any case, it is never advisable to allow outside visitors into your poultry house unless they have a definite job to do.

Another disease prevention measure would be to place waterers and feeders under wire covered platforms. A certain amount of water is usually spilled out around the waterers; by using a wire covered platform the water will go down through the wire and chicks will not have access to it. It has been found that there is a greater concentration of droppings around feeders than anywhere else on the brooder house floor; the result is that litter around the feeders usually becomes quite damp. By placing feeders on wire covered platforms access to the damp litter by the growing birds is prevented.

A sanitation programme on the range is important. Soil contamination, contaminated feed hoppers, pools of water around the drinking vessels, are common causes of loss from disease. Clean range can be achieved by a rotation system, allowing at least two years of rest before using that particular range again. If lack of space prohibits this system, intensive and regular cultivation is a safeguard. Sunlight and air are two great disease killers. Over-crowding on range, particularly in the Fall, is liable to allow colds to develop. Feed hoppers, water vessels and the colony houses should be moved from time to time.

Club News
On April 29, the Poultry Club held its meeting in the East Baltic School. The meeting was called to order by the President, followed by the roll call which was responded to by eleven members. The minutes were read and approved. It was moved and seconded that membership fee be 15 cents also called on the directors to give the roll call by answered next night with the name of your favorite flower. The date set for next meeting was May 23. It was moved and seconded that Joan Dixon and Anita Rose bring games for next night. The President then called on the directors to give the lesson. The meeting was then adjourned.

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BE SURE TO GET A COPY of this week's Star Weekly for an excellent story on The Charlottetown Centennial. Get an extra copy and send one to your friends, thus assisting in advertising our 100th Birthday this year.

LODGE MATRON RETURNS—Mrs. Ronald Parker, District Deputy Grand Matron, Order of the Eastern Star of Nova Scotia with jurisdiction over P. E. I. returned home on Saturday after visiting chapters in Guysborough and Halifax counties.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.—The Annual Congregational Meeting of the Brearley Presbyterian Church will be held in the Church Friday evening, May 27th, at 8 p. m. Rev. Lawrence Blaikie, Interim-Moderator.

ENGAGEMENT.—Mr. and Mrs. Frederick J. Mullen, Tracadie, P. E. I., announce the engagement of their youngest daughter, Freda Theresa to John Alexander David, son of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick MacCormac, St. Margaret's, P. E. I. Marriage to take place the latter part of July.

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We And Our Neighbors

PORTRAITS AND POLAR REGIONS

My friends were amused that instead of flying, I traveled from the island to Chicago, from Chicago to New York, by train—and the slowest trains possible! Perhaps I'm really an old-fashioned person at heart, as far as speed is concerned, but perhaps a better reason is that "good-byes" get more difficult with the passing years and a leisurely over-night ride gives time for throwing off the sadness of parting before feeling the gladness of reunions.

Flying stirs the imagination but watching fields and woods and mountains and waters slipping past, and particularly looking out from one's berth at night over sleeping farms and towns quiet the heart.

And now, here I am in New York. I am fully aware that there is ugliness, crime and misery in this great city. Is that not also true of other great cities? But how much of beauty there is, of hope and the possibilities of a better life for all. And the fun of the unexpected!

My second day in New York I went to the Grand Central Station to retrieve a suit-case. Of the crowds hurrying here and there, of the endlessly different hum of bells, I shall speak another time. This day, on my way to the baggage room, I noted an interesting group of about fifty men and women waiting for an elevator to the Grand Central Art Galleries. One woman fascinated me. She was dressed in white and had copper hair and sapphire eyes; and her skin, her features and expression were equally lovely. I had an hour to spare, why not

go along thought I, see more of the beautiful lady—and enjoy the paintings too?

So I did and found myself in a party of invited guests to view a special exhibition of "Portraits by Bassford"! No one questioned my right to be there and the cocktails were passed to me as well as the others without discrimination!

Occupying the place of honor was a portrait of my lady with the blue eyes! Only, in the portrait she had hazel eyes, and she was described in the catalogue as "Miss Virginia MacWatters, Star of the Metropolitan Opera." I chose a moment when she wasn't surrounded and asked her why the artist hadn't done justice to the color that Nature had so generously given her eyes. She had wondered too, said Miss MacWatters, but "hazel" is what the artist saw.

People kept coming to view the portraits (there were others of prominent men and women) and drink the cocktails and after saying a few words to this one and that one I slipped into an adjoining room that might have been in a different world.

There were few people about and the paintings dealt with a world of ice and snow, polar bears and reindeer and rugged men—not with men and women of fashion. And even a layman could see that the painter knew this world deep down.

The paintings were indeed by Col. Bert Balchen, a famous Polar Explorer. They showed the color and vividness of the North as well as the brilliant whiteness we associate with Polar regions. Some day I must go there!

Death Of Former Island Lady

The death of Mrs. Minnie Drinkwater of 85 High Street, Charlestown, Mass., occurred in Holy Ghost Hospital, Cambridge, Mass. on Sunday, May 8th, 1955, in her 78th year.

The late Mrs. Drinkwater, born in Newport, P.E.I., was a daughter of the late Louis Campbell and Christie MacDonald. Since her marriage to the late David E. Drinkwater 35 years ago, she resided in Charlestown, Mass.

The funeral was held on Thursday, May 12, to St. Mary's Church, Charlestown, where a Solemn Requiem High Mass was celebrated by Rev. John J. Forgarty, assisted by Rev. Leonard P. McGrath, Deacon and Rev. Gerard J. McCann, Sub-Deacon.

The funeral services were attended by many mourners, (relatives and friends) including members

of St. Gertrude Court, M. C. O. F., and St. Mary's Women's Sodality, of which the late Mrs. Drinkwater was an active member. Burial was in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Malden, Mass. One brother John J. Campbell of Newport, P. E. I. survives. May her soul rest in peace.

IT MAY BE YOUR LIVER

If life's not worth living It may be your liver! It's a fact it takes up to two pints of liver bile a day to keep your digestive tract in top shape. If your liver bile is not flowing freely your food may not digest... gas blows up your stomach... you feel constipated and all the fun and spice go out of life. That's when you need mild gentle Carter's Little Liver Pills. These famous vegetable pills help stimulate the flow of liver bile. Soon your digestion starts functioning properly and you feel that happy days are here again! Don't let your liver go! Always keep Carter's Little Liver Pills on hand. 37¢ at your druggist.

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Bringing Up Baby

With longer days showing stronger sun rays, it's by no means too early to consider tanning sessions (which help the skin to manufacture valuable Vitamin D for your baby. Matter of fact, it's a good idea to start sun-bathing as early in the season as warm allows — before the sun is really a-blast.

More on the sunny side. Let the word "gradual" be your guide when sunning baby. Start with 2 minutes a day, dividing time fore and aft. Increase time gradually. Never expose baby to more than 30 minutes. And happy basking to both of you.

Summer time on any time here's a treat to tickle your sweet. Gerber Strained Fruit Dessert, a wonderful combination of three favorite fruits of the patty-cake set: orange, pineapple and apricot—tea,ed up with a touch of tapioca for a texture so delight a delicate tongue.

2 short-cuts. (1) When baby's overalls get worn at the knees or too short in the legs, snip 'em off for sun-suits. (2) Soakers double-duty nicely as trunk for your sun-bathing beauty.

Golden treasure in more ways than one. Gerber Strained Egg Yolks have a creamy, custard-like texture, a delicate fresh-egg flavor that little ones really relish. They're rich in blood-building iron, vitamin A and a good supplementary source of complete proteins. Last but not least—they're so versatile! Serve "as is"—mix with foods—or, for toddlers, try a recipe like this:

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