



MODERN FARMER

Dutch Nets Can Save Cherries From Birds

BOSTON. — There are going to be a lot of frustrated robins in these parts if Jacob Van Beelen has his way.

Mynheer Van Beelen is the 71-year-old head of a famous net-making family of Ymuiden, Holland, and if you go in at all for seafood the chances are that the fish you eat has been caught in one of his "best manias." But the brand that brings him to Boston now has nothing to do with fish.

PROTECTIVE NETS

The robins, grackles, starlings and other garden robbers won't like it, but Mynheer Van Beelen is trying to introduce to New England the nets that protect your fruit from the ravages of the birds, already in routine use in Great Britain and the continent. It's time the thinks that the growers got at least a few of their berries and cherries.

Many agree with him. Out in Franklin county this summer commercial growers of blueberries had to cover their bushes to save their crops from the rapacious birds. The suburbanites' strawberries are pretty well digested by now and the raspberries are going fast. But by next season, perhaps, the Van Beelen offensive may be on its earnest.

"They won't let the birds eat their fruit in Europe," Mynheer Van Beelen says. To England alone we ship two or three tons of our garden net's twice a week. The nets last for years and so are a good investment."

The nets are cotton fishing nets which have become hard from the action of the water and so will not hold the catch. They are cleaned and repaired for their new job. They cost 6-12 cents per square yard at dockside in Boston or New York, a price that makes them a little expensive for large scale commercial use, but within the reach of the suburban gardener.

To protect a cherry tree, stakes are driven into the ground on either side of the tree and the net spread over the stakes. Mynheer Van Beelen points out that the net must be far enough from the cherries so that the robins will not be able to reach through and grab a bite. "Let 'em eat worms."

EXPANDING EXPORTS

At his age, although he looks more like 80 than 74, Mynheer Van Beelen didn't make this trip to America solely to save anybody's cherries. Because of the exchange situation, it is necessary for his company, as well as every other concern in the Netherlands, to expand its exports to America.

Long before the war he sold fine manila nets to F. J. O'Hara and Sons, Inc., one of Boston's great fishing concerns, and he visited the O'Hara's while here to renew old acquaintances and get new orders. But his main purpose is to find a market for his garden nets and athletic nets—tennis, badminton, football, and so on—which already are widely used in Britain and on the continent.

SLOW COMEBACK

"We have so many orders at our plant that we can't finish them all," he says. "But we have to disappoint our customers in Holland and Britain and take orders here because we need the dollars. We have no choice in the matter."

"We sell nets not only to the O'Hara's but to the governments of Canada and Poland. They like our nets. They catch good fish if there are fish."

Holland is coming back from the war very slowly. Mynheer Van Beelen reports, although her people are working very hard. A drain on the country is the need of maintaining armies in Indonesia. Then some market's have disappeared. Once Holland exported her surplus herring to Germany but now Britain, having a zone and an army of occupation, has taken over this herring market, too.

Mynheer Van Beelen loves America, but is a little confused by it. "Everybody is rushing around," he says. "Everybody is always in a hurry, women as well as men. It's like a current."

He attributes his own vigor at 74 to the practice of two rules: sleep late in the morning; and don't eat too much.

It's the latter rule he would impose on the robins but perhaps they will not thrive on it.

NEWSY NOTES

THE WHITE CROWNED SPARROW

This rather handsome bird, is conspicuous by reason of the wide white median stripe that passes over its crown, and is flanked by black stripes on each side. It is this feature that differentiates it at first glance from the white-throated sparrow.

It is a western bird, and seems to have been scarcer in eastern Canada until quite recently. Bain, in a single line, refers to it as a "wayward wanderer," associating with the Fox and Tree Sparrows in their migrations. Local Maritime lists only mention it casually as a migrant, and the first real light on the subject came when Mr. J. Frank Sterns reported the White-crown, as fairly common since 1928. The late Mr. Ludlow Jenkins of Marshfield, wrote "A great flight of White-crowns over the Island, Spring 1933." There are also records from Pownal, furnished by Miss Maude M. Jones, who brought this matter up to date by observing a white-crown on May 2, 1949.

Their negotiations take them from their nesting places in the extreme north down to the latitude of North Carolina for the winter. As they return north they join the Fox Sparrow in its nightly scratching among the fallen leaves in the thickets. There they find and feed on large numbers of dormant insects that would otherwise emerge in spring and injure the crops, etc. White-crown Sparrow. AOU. 534. Fairly common migrant (1949). Adult plumage: Crown of head with conspicuous white stripes, bordered by alternate streaks of black and white; lores (space between eyes) black; no white on chin; Black rather fluffy. Upper parts ash-gray streaked brown and whitish; tail dusky, slightly notched. Wings brownish, with two narrow wing-bars. Underparts grayish white. Immature birds with centre of crown grayish brown, and sides of crown rufous brown. Length of adults about 5.85 inches.

ODDS AND ENDS

Hop Scotch Melody (or Polka). Most readers have heard the record of this music, but why "Hop Scotch"? I was interested to learn that the game bearing this name is as popular in this neighborhood as it was in Northumberland. It was a favorite game with the younger schoolgirls, though not with their parents, since it had the effect of scuffing the sole of the right-foot boot into holes in short order. The scoring was done by propelling a post-charge through a series of compartments (outlined on the ground with chalk) by pushing it with the right foot. Since the left was to be kept off the ground, the result was a hop. The arms, used as balancers, were bent at the elbows, so that the fore-arms were upright. This gave a kind of "sword dance" appearance, and added the "Scotch" to the title of the game. In Britain the post-charge was called a "boody," a word whose lineage I could not trace. Some children's games can claim a venerable antiquity, but I hesitate to allow "Hop Scotch" more than a century and a half since its initial game.

The Rochdale Pioneers. In answer to A. B., I think the "Rochdale Pioneers," the subject of your enquiry, were a group of industrial workers who began a grocery store at Rochdale, in the early nineteenth century. Rochdale is a town in the cotton spinning district of Lancashire, and lies about eleven miles north of Manchester, the County Town. At that time wages were extremely low and the aforesaid workers found it hard to make a living; they therefore decided to go into the grocery business for themselves, and save the "middleman's" cost. I have heard that their first venture was the purchase of a chest of tea, from the wholesalers. They each contributed to the fund (or price) and the tea was weighed out to each as his share. (There was in this case no mention of dividend, since all was net cash.) The trouble with this style of business was that some consumed their quota long before others were ready for another chest of tea! After "trial and error," the dividend system was evolved and this did more than anything else to popularize the movement.

"Rochdale Co-operative Stores" sprang up all over England, and in the big towns there was the Central Co-op, and all its "branches." Soon, several Stores joined to operate Flour Mills, Furniture Factories, and so on. The result is a kind of "State with-

State Sounds Alarm Against Moth Menace

BOSTON, Mass.— The gypsy moth, most serious defoliator of growing timber in the Northeast, is building up to a peak of infestation in southeastern Massachusetts.

A recent survey of aerial defoliation by the caterpillars last summer shows 80,230 acres stripped of leaves by 25 to 100 per cent in the counties of Bristol, Norfolk and Plymouth.

Conservation Commr. Arthur T. Lyman said the total was two and a half times the total acreage of striping reported in 1948.

He called on counties, towns and cities in general within the infested areas to take advantage of the new and efficient methods of aerial spraying to eradicate the pest.

The significance of such defoliation will be more readily understood when it is realized that the loss of annual growth caused by the gypsy moth is directly proportional to the per cent of defoliation," he said. "A tree defoliated 75 per cent, only puts on 25 per cent of its annual growth."

"In addition to the losses suffered from loss in growth by defoliation are many other important factors difficult to evaluate. Young white-pine trees are killed by the caterpillars create a nuisance which affects the retail and value of real estate.

"Unsprayed fruit, shade and ornamental trees are damaged. Hundreds of oak trees in forested areas have been killed due to repeated defoliation, and in some instances only one year's defoliation has killed these trees. Defoliation and killing of trees affects the forest as a whole by opening up the stand so the remaining trees become malformed. Removal of the forest floor to dry out creating a hazard, and in addition, valuable ground water is lost through evaporation."

Commissioner Lyman estimated that the annual loss "is even more appalling when it is realized we can grow and market lumber here in Massachusetts for around \$20 per thousand feet, against a cost of at least \$120 per thousand for that we must import."

Egg Market Firm And Demand Strong

The production of eggs in P. E. I. is not sufficient to meet the demand, reports Mr. F. M. Nash, district inspector, poultry products. The market is firm and the demand is strong and prices have advanced one cent per dozen on the basis of a large and a medium egg. All available supplies are moving freely to Maritime and Newfoundland points.

Operators of grading stations are now quoting producers for ungraded eggs: A large 36-7; A medium 34-5; A pullet and B 25; C 20. (These prices are only two cents under prevailing prices for same period last year.)

Wholesalers are quoting operators of grading stations for the graded pack job station: A large 41; A medium 39; A pullet and B 30; C 25.

Wholesalers offering to retailers at: A large 43; A medium 41; A pullet and B 37.

Canadian Garden Service 1950

By Gordon Lindsay Smith

As soon as possible

Some people even broadcast over the last snow and as it melts it carries the seed down into the soft earth. On a sloping place, of course, this might not be advisable where running water might carry seed away.

Good grass seed usually comes in packages, and it consists of a blend of several different grasses. Some of these germinate quickly, providing some color and also the necessary protection for the later more permanent sorts. For shady locations one should get a special mixture. Either for patching or new lawns grass seed should be sown liberally and lightly raked in.

Like most plants grass will appreciate good soil and an occasional application of fertilizer. New grass is easily pulled out so one should make sure the mower is sharp.

Sweet Peas

To do well, sweet peas must go in early. If one follows directions on the seed packet success is guaranteed, that is unless we live in that very limited area of Canada where summer heat, and especially heat at night, is excessive. Dig a trench about a foot or so deep. Tamp in some well-rotted manure, leaves, etc. Top off with two or three inches of the finest and richest soil available and plant in this about three inches apart. Let the weather gradually fill in the trench to encourage deep root growth. Provide the necessary climbing material—strings or brush—and when the plants start to bloom clip daily.

Hotbeds and Window Flats

Where a large quantity of started plants are needed one can save expense by growing in a hotbed. It is best to get a government bulletin which will give the details of construction and maintenance. Briefly the affair is simply a bed of rich soil mounted on a layer of horse manure or something similar that will generate heat and the whole protected by a rough wooden frame on which is a sloping window. Or one can use a shallow box, three or four inches deep. Fill with a mixture of fine soil, sand and leaf mould. Until seeds germinate cover lightly with cloth or blotting paper. Water through this and don't let soil dry out.

Next Week—nursery stock, soil, etc.

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox and Mink Farming

Last week was silver fox auction week in London, Hudson's Bay Company leading off for reported prices unchanged to ten per cent advanced. Of the 11,000 skins offered during the first day's sale 48 per cent were disposed of. Darker types advanced ten per cent while full silvers were unchanged. Demand was strongest for half and three-quarter silvers and all the cheaper sorts. Top prices of H. B. C. were—three-quarter silvers, good colors, \$16; ordinary colors \$10.

Whiting, Chadwick, and Kelyer auctioned Russian silver fox for the afternoon of March 7th and they sold well at the following advanced prices... half-silvers, \$26; quarter silvers \$23; three-quarter silvers \$26; full silvers \$33. The following day they continued selling Russian and Norwegian silver fox and platinum and the market was very strong. The collection numbered 6,500 and was 70 per cent sold at an average price of \$15. An offering of 3,500, mostly of the same origin was 90 per cent sold. Top prices for the day's sale were: quarter silvers, \$15.50; three-quarter silvers \$34.50; full silvers \$33; platinum \$28. All Canadian silver fox were withdrawn due to the handicap of requiring hard currency purchased. Buyers were all from soft currency countries.

Johan Lindstrom, Director of the Norwegian Fur Breeders' Association, has issued an interview which will be of great interest to fox ranchers in Canada and the United States. Norway, as it is well known, before World War 2 was the world's largest producer of ratched fox skins - silver, platinum and blue foxes. Now they are, according to the interview, gradually shifting the emphasis of their production from fox to mink in order to recapture their former position in the world market.

"Norway is reducing its fox production because we cannot make it pay any more," Mr. Lindstrom explained. "Import and currency restrictions as well as high sales taxes have made it difficult to resume normal trade relations with countries which formerly were Norway's chief customers for fox skins. England, for instance, runs a 100 per cent tax, France has had a strict import quota, and it has been impossible to sell a single skin to Germany. Only through barter agreements has it been possible to trade with other countries, such as Italy, with whom furs have been exchanged for hats, felt and food."

In 1939, just before World War 2, Norway exported 370,000 skins, mostly silver fox and Norwegian blue foxes. Of this production France took at least 100,000; England and Germany each consumed 50,000; and about 25,000 of the best skins went to the United States. This figure for the United States is only approximate, because many American buyers bought through London rather than directly from Norway.

During the war, production was cut down to about one-third of the 1939 figure because of the scarcity of feed, and since the liberation in 1945, recovery has been slow. Gone are the former markets in South America, the Balkans and Poland, while Czechoslovakia has bought a few skins by trade agreement, and France, which took 100,000 before the war, bought only a small portion of that number in 1948, about 3,000 of which were mink and the balance foxes. One important result has been a sharp drop in the number of fur farms in Norway. Before the war there were 20,000, today there are only 10,000. It should be noted, however, that in Norway most fur farms also produced other agricultural products and only a few have fur farming as their exclusive interest.

N.B. Asks Potato Support Price

FREDERICTON, March 16 — (CP) — An amended motion, asking that Agriculture Minister Taylor be directed to continue negotiations with Federal authorities for a support price for the 1946 potato crop, was adopted without division in the New Brunswick Legislature today.

The original motion, by G. W. Perry (PC — Carleton) asked that such support be sought but made no reference to continued negotiations.

NAPOLEON and UNCLE ELBY by Clifford McBride



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ATTENTION FARMERS

The Department of Agriculture has arranged for a visit to this Province of Mr. Maitland MacKie Jr., one of Scotland's biggest grassland farmers and an outstanding authority on farm methods.

Mr. MacKie is a graduate of Aberdeen University, a former President of the Scottish Farmers Union, and now Chairman of Governors of the North of Scotland College of Agriculture. He farms a total acreage of 1,000, and runs a retail milk business in Scotland.

Every farmer who possibly can should make arrangements to attend a meeting to be held in Prince of Wales College on the evening of Friday, March 24, at 8:00 p.m., to hear this outstanding authority speak on "Dairy Farming" and "Grass Land Growing". Do not forget the date.

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