

FARM AND GARDEN.

LAY OUT GARDENS SO AS TO ADMIT OF HORSE CULTIVATION.

Various Modes of Potato Culture Practiced in This Country—A Corn Marker Which Marks Three Rows—Salient Points in Cheese Making.

The corn marker illustrated in the accompanying cuts is recommended by The Ohio Farmer and is described by that authority as follows:

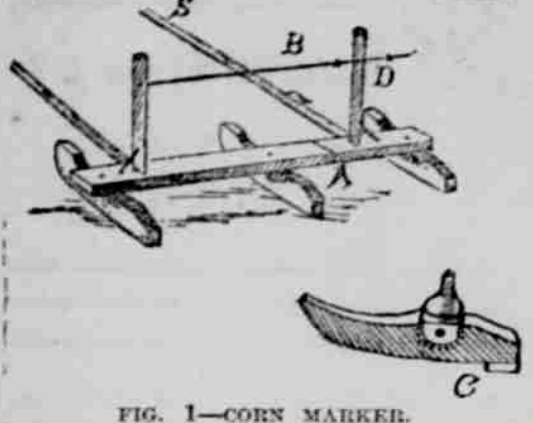


FIG. 1—CORN MARKER.

Fig. 1 shows a marker which marks three rows at a time, and is plain to the eye. The headpiece is 3x3 inches and is hinged at A, to permit all the markers to touch the ground at all times. Without this hinge, the inequalities of the ground would often keep one of the markers off the ground. B is the gauge rod, to the outer end of which is attached a marker of some sort to follow the last row previously made in order to keep the rows straight all over the field. If the markers do not make the marks plain enough, nail a piece of plank on the bottom, as shown at C. It is better to have the gauge rod hinged on a post over the central marker, and then it can be turned over at the ends, to use in going back.

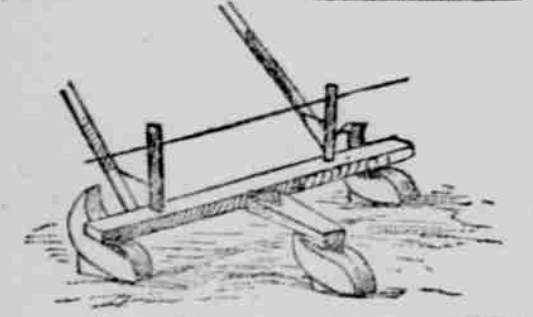


FIG. 2—CORN MARKER.

Fig. 2 has the gauge rod extending out on each side far enough to reach the last row marked. The middle marker is hinged to the headpiece, instead of having the latter hinged, which answers the same purpose. For making four rows at a time, the hinge in the first cut must be put in the center of the head, half way between the middle two markers. In the second one illustrated, the hinged markers must be at the ends of the headpiece. A marker making four rows is rather unhandy to use, and in practice three markers will be found enough.

Different Modes of Potato Culture.

Not a great many years ago it was the practice to plant whole potatoes in such quantities as to form quite a large percentage of the expected yield, which has been succeeded at the present time by the opposite extreme of planting single eyes, leaving ample room between the two methods for cultivators to experiment as to the amount of seed and the methods of cultivation from which the best results may be obtained. Owing to the short crop of last year, seed will be high, and it will be a good time to plant whole small potatoes, such as have been given to the pigs in plentiful years, and with many persons they have all along been preferred to cut seeds. Planting Irish and Scotch grown seeds is unsafe, as those who have experimented with them generally represent them as unsuited to our climate.

There is a general agreement on rows about three and a half feet apart, with hills three inches apart in the rows, and one or two eyes in a hill, while at the same time occasional trials with whole seed have yielded larger crops; but so long as cut seed proves satisfactory a majority will no doubt continue its use. It is of no use to plant potatoes on wet, heavy soil; while the ground should not be excessively rich, it should be clean, dry and mellow, and generously fertilized. Where barn yard manure is used, which contains all the necessary elements, it should be well rotted and decomposed, as in its green state it is liable to cause scabby potatoes, where this is not plentiful some reliable commercial article should take its place. Another quite good plan is to spread the barn yard manure and plough it under, and at planting, drill the commercial kind moderately in the rows. This method is practiced in many sections and by it the tubers get the advantages of both kinds of fertilizers, first from the concentrated ones, and later on from that of the barn yard, a moderate application of both being thought better than the use of either one by itself.

A successful potato grower in Union county, New Jersey, says his practice for several years has been to plant only one eye to a hill, cut from the end with its more numerous eyes at all. He puts in the rows 600 pounds of some well known brand of commercial manure to the acre, mixes it with the dirt in the rows by drawing a chain through before dropping the seed, and using no other kind. He has always had good crops, even including the present unfavorable year, and believes he can probably use a year to the acre of commercial fertilizers whenever the average price of potatoes in this section can be obtained for his crop.

The potato has the habit of degenerating to a degree that has caused the best and favorite varieties of former times to become obsolete, so that even their names are scarcely remembered, and some of the more recent ones, such as the Peach Blow and Early Rose, are giving place to never seedling varieties, that is themselves displaced hereafter in the same way. If we were dependent on the tubers alone for the propagation of the potato this would be an alarming fact, but fortunately we have in the seed the ready means of rejuvenating the species, and the more than 500 new varieties, many of them surpassing the former excellencies of the parent stock, attest the success of potato specialists in this direction.

In states where the crop can be harvested in May or June, and sometimes as late as July, it is becoming somewhat common to raise a second crop by exposing the small potatoes to the sun for a week or longer, until they become dry and green in color. These are then planted whole, and are dug in the fall for seeds the next year. This seed has not the same tendency to sprout through the winter from a warm

cellar as the fully matured tubers. As the small ones used in the summer for the second planting are slow in germinating so soon after being dug, they should be started to sprouting before being planted, by putting them into barrels set in a cool place and sprinkling them daily and covering the barrels with a damp cloth until they show signs of germinating. Flat and hill culture each has its advocates; farmers are more competent to determine from their own experiments, which is best for their own soils than from any advice that can be given. For the same reason, no particular varieties will be recommended for seed, except to say that for the main crop select the ones that from your own experience and that of your neighbors you know to be well adapted to your soil and your market. This, however, is not to be understood as discouraging any one from testing in a moderate way the new varieties confidently recommended by well known specialists, as it is only in this manner that the best can find their way into general use.

In the Vegetable Garden.

It is a very important point, in forming a good garden, so to arrange the planting of the different vegetables as to insure the judicious selection of sorts and a proper time of planting for each of the varieties selected, thereby securing for the table a succession of the different kinds extending throughout the season, rather than a dozen varieties all coming in together, when it is impossible to use more than three or four; or, on the other hand, the occurrence now and then of times when there is no vegetable whatever ripe for the table.

In arranging dates for planting vegetables for a succession, it should be noted that as the season advances and becomes warmer, peas and, in fact, all kinds of vegetables grow faster and overtake one another, as it would seem. The dates of planting the different sorts do not lead to corresponding intervals in gathering the crops. For example, though five days' difference in date of planting peas in April will make about as many days difference in the time of the harvesting in June, yet five days' difference in planting in May will make hardly any visible difference in the ripening in July.

Important Points in Cheese Making.

One of the leading features of the forthcoming report of the New York state dairy commissioner consists of opinions from leading dairymen on the best methods of conducting the cheese business, the prevalence of fraud in production and by what means the consumption of it can be best increased.

The question of branding cheese with the official state brand evidently remains an open one among the state dairymen. A good many of them are pronounced in favor of branding; others consider such branding advantageous to consumers only; others are indifferent, while a considerable number condemn the state brand as useless or detrimental to the natural relations of producer and consumer.

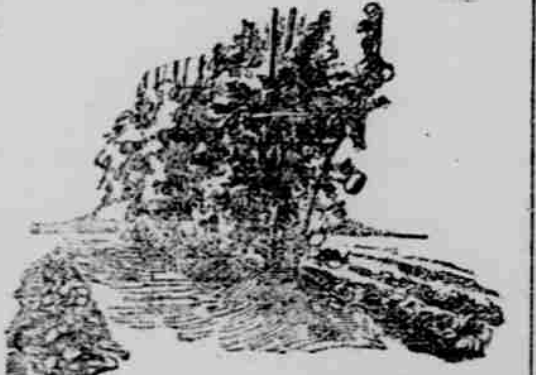
The replies to the question, How prevalent is the habit of branding cheese as "full cream" when it is not, cannot fail to gratify cheese consumers, as in more than 100 reports on this point there is not a single expression of positive knowledge of the existence of this habit.

Hints About Truck Farming.

Where truck farming, as it is called, or gardening for market is to be carried on along with other farm work by a farmer who has sons grown up or nearly so, it will be an excellent plan to put one of them in charge of this department and require no other services from him, or else hire a reliable man for the purpose, or rent the garden plot on such terms as may be agreed on. In this business it will generally be found best to separate it as much as possible from the ordinary farm work, else both are liable to suffer from conflicting demands for attention from each at a critical time.

How to Lay Out Gardens.

Since it is becoming the practice to lay out vegetable and berry gardens so as to be kept clean by horse cultivation, it is well to place the different crops in such a position with each other as to make them convenient of access, as well as to afford a pleasing appearance. As a single example of such an arrangement is here reproduced from Country Gentleman an illustration in which a line of raspberries was placed next to a narrow grass walk extending lengthwise through the garden and next to the raspberries several rows of strawberries, and still beyond these a line of currants.



STRAWBERRIES—WALK—RASPBERRIES.

The grass walk was four feet wide, and was kept cut short by passing a hand lawn mower once a week, with only a few minutes' work. At the edge of this walk was a line of Caroline raspberries, this variety being of low and more rounded growth than other sorts, and when in fruit its rich yellow berries give it a quite ornamental appearance. The strawberries next to the raspberries, being well enriched with manure, and kept well cultivated and clean by horse power, the raspberries have on one side all the advantages of high culture, while all the crop may be gathered from the smooth grass walk.

In laying out a kitchen and fruit garden, an occasional grass walk extending lengthwise, gives much easier access to the different parts. The edges of these walks are kept sufficiently trimmed by the cutting blade of the one horse cultivator or with the light one horse plow, and laborious hand labor is almost entirely avoided.

Agricultural News.

The vegetable crop in most of the southern states will be large. According to The Cincinnati Price Current, the clover seed crop of 1887 was a fairly large one of good quality. The crop was short in the northwest; elsewhere, according to the authority quoted, the supply was about as usual.

The Massachusetts cattle commissioners, after due investigation, report that hog cholera in that state is spread by feeding swill containing germs of the disease brought from the west in fresh pork, and that in no case does it spread from pet to pet unless infected animals come in contact with healthy ones.

FARM AND GARDEN.

WIRE STAKES ADVISED FOR PLANTS. A PROLIFIC WAX BEAN.

Improved Modes in Corn Culture—Valuable Facts Regarding Plows and Plowing—Some Other Matters That Will Be Found to Be of Interest.

The important subject of plows and plowing has been recently shown forth in its many phases by Professor Sanborn, in a bulletin giving a report of results and observations gained and made on the Missouri state agricultural grounds. Following is a brief summary of these observations:

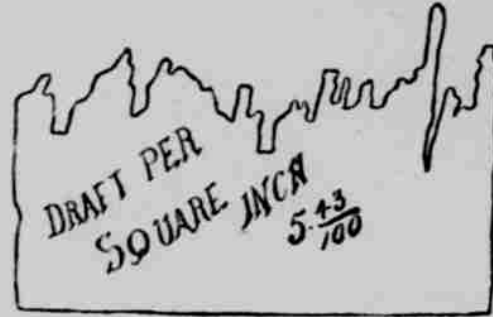


FIG. 1—PROPER DEPTH.

1. A deflection of the traces when under draught, from a straight line from shoulder to doubletree results in a decided loss of power, and such loss is applied to the galling and worrying of the horse.

2. The use of a truck or a little wheel under the end of the plough beam gained 14.1 per cent of the draft as an average of the trials made, and in addition gave a more uniform furrow and relieved the plowman. This saving can be made only when the line of draft is right.

3. The use of the coulters was, without exception, attended with a decided loss of force or increased draft by whatever form of coulters used, but was less with the new style coulters than with the rolling and old fashioned coulters. The average gain of draft by dispensing with the coulters was 15.6 per cent. The coulters invariably disturbed the line of draft, resulting in a furrow of different dimensions from those formed without it.

4. The draft of a plow decreases as depth of furrow increases until it reaches the plow's normal capacity, and then increases as the depth is increased beyond this capacity of the plow. This law is modified by the fact that as a furrow increases in size the ratio of cutting face or edge of plow to the furrow turned decreases.

5. The draft of a plow decreases as width of furrow increases until the normal capacity of the plow is reached, after which it increases again under the same limitations as in previous case of depth, yet it does not increase in as rapid a ratio as is seen in case of depth. The absolute draft in a 15-inch furrow was less than for a 10-inch furrow.

6. The discord of these results with those previously found by others has several possible explanations, one of which may possibly be the influence of plow improvement.

7. The necessity of intelligently adjusting the furrow to the normal capacity of the plow or using only plows that will be normal to the furrow turned was made apparent. The loss in draft from a furrow varying from the plow's normal capacity by two points only was for an average of all trials of varying widths and depths 21 per cent. From the standpoint of draft it is poor economy to turn a furrow wider than the plow is normal to.

8. If one adds the saving from the three factors discussed—truck, coulters and width and depth—one gets 49.7 per cent; or a plow with truck on, coulters off, and plow a good sized furrow, will give this per cent of gain when put against a plow with coulters on, truck off and turning a shallow, narrow furrow; or rather the latter will draw 49.7 per cent, harder than the former, if the professor's data are correct.

9. A seven by fourteen inch furrow requires about three horse power to turn it. Those who use two horses, either turn a small, costly furrow or overdraw their horses upon sod land of the kind in question—a clay loam.

10. A furrow turned whose size is not normal to the plow is usually, if not always, a jerky or uneven one, poor and hard on the workman. The accompanying cuts, which represent the actual draft and its fluctuations at varying depths and widths, show this. Attention is called to the irregularity of the lines in Figs. 1 (proper depth) and 2 (improper depth) in comparison. The wrong depth gives an uneven draft. The same was found in cuts taken where a too narrow furrow is compared with a furrow of proper width. In both cases the more irregular lines drew the harder of the two.

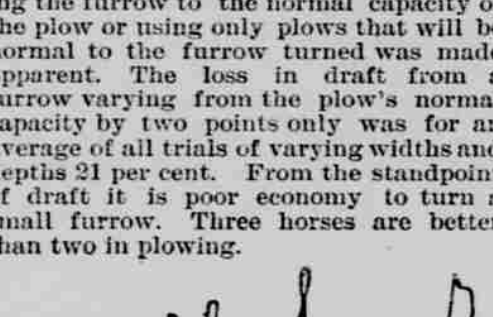


FIG. 2—IMPROPER DEPTH.

11. The planting and cultivating of corn. The time for corn planting varies with the latitude and also depends much upon the weather. As soon as the days are mild and the ground warm is a safe rule, wherever that may be, in all localities. Three conditions are essential to the production of a paying crop of corn, namely good seed, a rich friable soil and thorough tillage. Progressive farmers have demonstrated the economy of a thorough preparation of the soil for the seed; indeed not a few of our most successful growers advocate and practice, as best and easiest, the cultivation previous to planting; that is to say, they do not use a plow after planting, but let all the deep culture of the soil precede it.

Where manure is required the better way is to spread it broadcast and plow it in, if coarse, or harrow it in, if well pulverized and decomposed. When manure is thoroughly incorporated in the soil, the roots of the plants are certain to take it up, and the development of ear and grain will correspond with that of stalk and leaves, which is not the case when a limited amount of fertilizer is placed in hill or drill only. To gain the best results from the employment of stimulating elements in hill or drill, available plant food must be near at hand and in sufficient quantity to carry the plant, once started, on to the perfection of

its growth. An early start is a great point gained, and the employment of fertilizers in the drill is of decided advantage, provided, as has been already told, the soil outside contains sufficient food to keep up the growth of the plant. Poultry manure and Peruvian guano have such rendered valuable service when applied in the drill.

Large beans are nowadays usually planted in drills, and corn planters and cultivators are quite generally adopted, and it is commonly conceded that the drill system induces the greatest yield, other conditions being equal. Flat culture is now the general rule for the corn crop, it having long ago been proven that hilling is now required for the support of the plant, as was formerly supposed, and there is also a saving of labor in the flat culture system. A plan of drill culture, favored by some on light and naturally dry upland, is what is known as the furrow system of planting. The field is broken up as usual and made level. At the time of planting one thorough harrowing is given and the furrows laid off and thrown up into five feet beds, the corn being planted in the furrows between the beds. The object of this plan is to insure moisture to the crop. The fertilizers are sown in the bottom of the furrows and mixed with the soil by running along the furrows a sharp single shovel coulters or dragging a chain through them. Then the seed is dropped and covered.

The after cultivation is done with cultivators, which gradually level down the surface of the beds, returning the soil to the corn and leaving the general surface level when completed.

The system of "checking" corn, so that the cultivation may be in two directions, direct and across, is much practiced in the northern and western states. At the east and in many of the middle states planting in drills and cultivating shallow and flat with cultivator and hoe prevails among the more progressive farmers.

As to the matter of seed, farmers are advised for their general crops to plant such varieties as in former years have proven successful in their own localities and in soils similar to their own. Small plots may be profitably employed in testing new and promising kinds introduced by trustworthy seedsmen or other farmers.

An Improved Wax Bean. The old German wax bean has long enjoyed an enviable reputation among wax beans. It matures early, the flavor is superior and its pods are tender, but it is not so prolific as some other varieties.

New Prolific German Wax Bean. And now is introduced for the first time to the public the new prolific German wax bean, an improved strain of the old favorite German wax. This new strain, which has been tested in many localities with both field and garden culture, appears to have given very general satisfaction. Vick, who has been testing it for four years, has it catalogued this season under the name of New Prolific German Wax. His stock was started from a single seed of the old German wax, and while the general appearance of the plant of the new prolific resembles the old and retains its good points, Vick claims for the newcomer that it is a stronger and more robust grower; its pods are straighter, longer, rounder, and that it is more than twice as productive—in fact, combines all the good qualities of the old with the improvements wrought by years of careful selection and cultivation.

Wire Plant Stakes.

American Garden made an admirable suggestion when it advised wire plant stakes as worthy of adoption. In these days, when wire is so much used for fences and arbors, there are always short lengths left over that can be utilized for stakes. The authority referred to tells just how to do this.

Take wire of sufficient strength to afford some support (small wire will do for delicate little plants, but heavy ones require stout); straighten it and cut into lengths from one to three and a half feet; then, with a strong pair of pliers or use of an anvil swage, bend one end into a ring, as in Fig. 2.

It is important to put this curve on the end, as it holds the tying material in place without being so tight as to choke the plant, and without it the sharp wires are a constant source of danger, being liable to catch in the clothing and seriously injure any one thrown upon them. Groups of flower stalks can be tied up by taking three of the stakes and passing the string through the wire loops. A better way when shaping the wires is to make some of them into pairs, shaped as in Fig. 1, where the tops catch together, forming a wire circle to support the plants, allowing them to develop their natural beauty of growth.

If these wires are dipped into thin paint or black varnish they will last for years. An easy way to do this is to stop up one end of a piece of two inch gas pipe of the right length, fill with the varnish and quickly dip the stakes in and hang them up to dry. Make now and then you will be glad of it when staking time comes.

Here and There.

Now is the time to study the catalogues of trustworthy seedmen. According to late accounts the Louisiana strawberry crop is the largest ever grown.

Arkansas and Texas claim that the immigration into those states during the past year has been greater than in any previous season.

Prof. De Muth is quoted as saying, that hay fed to a cow between meals is worse than wasted, as it interferes with the digestion of the regular ration.

In no way can a farmer with less trouble enrich a poor field with scanty herbage than by feeding sheep on it. So affirms an English sheep farmer.

Readers interested in the production of silk cocoons can obtain information on the subject by applying to the commissioner of agriculture, Washington, D. C., who has on hand some silkworm eggs for distribution.

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