

Agricultural Department.

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Southern Cultivator.—To those who would like an Agricultural paper from the Southern States, we recommend the Southern Cultivator, published at Atlanta, Ga., by Wm. & W. L. Jones, at \$2 per annum.

Orchard and Nursery. The present custom of packing trees in boxes has some advantages over the old one of baling with straw, but with all the care those that are sent a long distance are liable to detention in transportation, and it will often happen that the trees, when opened, have a most unpromising look, the bark being badly shriveled.

Planting the trees as soon as they are received. Cut injured roots smooth and shorten the tops. Make a hole broad enough to allow the roots to be spread; throwing on some fine soil and work it in among the roots with the fingers, so that no hollow places will be left; put on more soil and press it down with the foot, and the tree will not need

Orchard Management. A correspondent to the Onida Circular makes some judicious remarks on planting out and management of apple orchards. Care, at the outset, in planting is of prime importance. The tops and branches of the young tree should be cut back to correspond with the shortening of the roots, thus preserving a proper balance between the top and the roots, and preventing exhaustion by a disproportionate development of buds in the spring before feeders or small roots have been formed to supply the exhaustion of sap caused thereby.

As the time for pruning trees is approaching, I may do a service to the readers of the Cultivator by giving the composition of a wax, as a covering for words, which has given me much satisfaction. Shellac dissolved in alcohol has been the common varnish for woods, long in use. There are two objections to this: the shellac covering is exceedingly thin and brittle, and is therefore, but a partial, and not sufficiently permanent protection. Again, the alcohol required to dissolve the shellac, is in such proportion that I think some injury results to the bark and new and delicate texture of the wood, from its application. Instead of this, take two pounds of rosin, one pound of beeswax, and one pound of best tallow; dissolve as much shellac as ten ounces of alcohol will take up. When the wax is just melted, (in bottles standing in a kettle of hot water is best) pour in the varnish. After this, alcohol may be added, to reduce the thickness to the desired point. It will be found that this mixture is sufficiently waxy to yield to the growth of the tree, and also that it causes the least possible injury to the tender, woolly tissue.—W. C. Searns in Boston Cultivator.

A borrowed tool, if broken, should be promptly replaced by a new one. A nice sense of honor in such matters is much to be commended.

Making Garden.

The housewife's happiest season of the year. The ground, already broken by the plow, is now made level by the passing rake. The slugs are exterminated, and the signs of spring favor, forth with apron full of clover seeds, the best of the last year's gavel, she sallies to the garden where, all day, breathing the pleasant odor of the mould, she bends and plants, while to her eyes of hope here springs the early pea, and there the bean, the lettuce and the radish, and what else her culinary providence requires.

The first operation in making garden is the preparation of the soil. If any portion of the ground is charged with an excess of moisture, all effort to bring it into a friable condition and great productivity will be unsuccessful, until the soil is relieved of the surplus water. When the ground appropriated to a garden is not underdrained thoroughly, by making drains some thirty or forty feet apart, it will be found of great service to cut channels two feet deep, between the plots that may be separated by walks.

Best soil should always be kept on the surface, as far as practicable, as the seeds need a mellow and rich bed not only to hasten germination, but to prompt a luxuriant growth. The soil must be thoroughly pulverized to a good depth—the deeper the better. In order to spade a garden properly, throw back the soil from a strip about five feet wide and one foot deep. This soil must be wheeled to the opposite side of the garden when the spading is finished.—After removing the surface soil as directed, spade the subsoil, pulverizing it thoroughly, and turned it, as early as practicable, to the place where it was taken up.

Then, spade another strip of the surface soil, throwing it, as the work is done, on the pulverized subsoil, until another strip of the subsoil has been laid bare, which may then be spaded. This is called trench or double spading. The blade of the spade enters the soil, in both instances, not less than one foot; and as the ground will be much more porous after it is spaded, the seed bed will be nearly or quite thirty inches deep. If the soil be broken deep, the roots of plants will strike much farther downward than they otherwise would, and thus avail themselves of the moisture farthest from the surface, which is not accessible when ground has not been spaded, nor plowed only a few inches in depth.

When to plant garden seeds. There is nothing gained by planting any kind of seed before the ground is sufficiently warm for it to germinate. Indeed, in many instances, plants are seriously injured by putting the seed in the ground too early.

If seeds be planted as soon as the soil is sufficiently warm to promote speedy germination, the plants will be more productive, than if the same seed had lain in the cold ground; for one or two weeks, before there was sufficient warmth to keep the plants growing.

It injures plants of any kind, as well as young animals, to expose them to such influences as will check their growth. When a young animal has been stunted by improper care, its frame can never be so perfectly developed, as it would have been, if it had been properly fed on nutritious food and kept growing from its birth. And the same is true of most kind of plants, especially of Indian corn. If seeds can be deposited in the soil, soon after a warm and gentle shower of rain, they will germinate much sooner than if planted previous to a heavy rain. The reason for this is obvious. When seeds are planted just before a heavy rain, the soil is washed down closely around them, thus excluding the air, which is essential to germination. But if seeds are covered with light soil, soon after a shower as the ground is sufficiently dry to work, all interstices of soil will be filled with warm aqueous vapor, which is more conducive to rapid germination than the close contact of cold and wet soil.

WHAT SEEDS TO PLANT EARLY. Although potatoes contain much starch, the sets, if properly managed, may be forwarded in their growth, several days, by putting them in a pail, or basket made dark with paper, and hanging in the kitchen. By this means sets may have sprouts two, or more inches in length, when the ground is sufficiently warm to put them out.

As peas germinate at a lower temperature than Indian corn, a row may be planted, and a wide board or two set on the edge to shield them from the cold north wind. In chilly weather the rows should be covered with a wide board.

Tomatoes, cucumbers, squashes, and melons, may be planted two weeks before the ground in the garden is sufficiently warm to promote their rapid growth, by planting the seeds on pieces of rich sods turned grass-side down, on a shelf in a stove-room, and furnished with fine garden mould, and watered twice a day. The roots will spread through the soils; and each piece may be removed to the garden with the hill of growing plants, without checking their growth in the least. Hills of choice squashes may be started in this manner, and kept in the kitchen until all danger of frost has passed, before the plants and sods are in the open ground. Tomato plants may be kept growing on a piece of rich sod until the stems are one foot high. Then if planted in rich soil, they will continue to grow rapidly, and fruit early in the season.

After hills of plants have been put out, barrels, boxes and tubs should always be turned over them during cold nights. Many other vegetables, as well as flowers, may be started early in the same way, with some satisfactory results.

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