PRUNE TREES BEFORE SAP STARTS—NEW RACE OF GLADIOLI

Pruning promotes vigorous growth the following season. Make all cuts close to the branch, otherwise the wound will be slow in healing, decay will set in and likely finally result in a hollow trunk that will break under the load of fruit or with the pressure of high winds.

Tree pruning may be done any time during the dormant season. Peaches are likely to have their tender fruit buds killed during winter and should not be pruned until early spring, so if many buds have been killed the pruning can be omitted so all the uninjured fruit buds may be left to bear fruit. If the buds are entirely destroyed the tops may be renewed by a more severe pruning than would ordinarily be given.

Apple trees are usually pruned to the open head system, giving the tree a graceful rounded head, sufficiently open to admit sunlight, with the branches spaced about the tree like the spokes of a wheel. Never permit one branch to grow immediately over another.

In New York State the favorite method of orchardists is to permit the tree to assume its natural shape, and only sufficient pruning is given to keep the branches from interfering with each other and cutting out superfluous branches. Branches must not be permitted to grow so close together that there will not be sufficient room for them to enlarge at the base as the tree grows.

In sawing large limbs care must be exercised or the limb will split and tear a large piece from the side of the tree, damaging it greatly. First saw the under side of the branch four or five inches from the parent branch,

Protruding stumps never heal.

cutting into the branch for several inches.

Then make the cut close to the parent branch from the top, as would naturally have been done in the first place.

Wounds that are likely to heal slowly should be painted. A good lead and oil paint makes a good covering. Some use tar, which of course must be applied warm.

Pear trees naturally form into less rounding heads than apples. Quinces need just enough pruning to keep them in form and to prevent the limbs from crossing and rubbing. The open head system is usually practised on peaches, the trees kept low and spreading. The young peach trees are more severely pruned when set out than other trees, cutting them back to short whips to reduce the danger of the trees dying during the first summer and to increase the development of low main branches.

Soon after the buds start on young peach trees rub off all young shoots except those wanted for main branches. Three or four of these distributed and spaced about the tree are better than a large number, as all growth is then thrown into permanent branches, which will be large and strong and more likely to survive a severe winter.

After the tree is five or six years old and has come into full bearing the centre should be kept open at the top and the branches cut back to prevent them from getting to tall.

Plums, like peaches, should be kept low, with open heads. Young plum trees should not be pruned so severely as peaches when they are set, but left with several branches as with pears or apples, and little pruning should be done on the trees until the fourth year after it is planted.

Cherry trees are generally allowed to assume their natural shape with a central branch, cutting out only the branches that are too close. Sour cherries form a more spreading, open head than sweet cherries, and like the sweet cherries need little pruning.

Grapevines should be cut back to two or three buds when they are planted. Train the vines to a wire

Cut limbs close to the branch from which they are removed and they will heal quickly.

trellis two feet from the ground and run an arm along the lower wire for a short distance, one arm run to the right, the other to the left. From these permanent arms two or three canes are run up the trellis perpendicularly at intervals of two feet. The upright canes are renewed every year from the base. When the arms begin to lose vigor new ones are developed from the trunk, although in good soil the arms will prove vigorous and productive for many years. Some recommend cutting back grapevines the second year after they are planted to a

B. First cut to prevent limb from splitting tree when falling. A. Where limb is severed, sawing from the top.

point where it will be only a little larger than when set, but the amateur is not satisfied to lose a year and in good soil it really is not necessary.

Blackberry and raspberry canes that bear fruit die the same season and the old canes should be cut out as soon as the crop is harvested, so the whole strength of the plant will be thrown into the new growth which springs from the roots early in the summer and bears fruit the following season. When the young canes of blackberries and black raspberries are two feet high they should be pinched back, which will cause them to become robust and well branched. The following spring the side branches should be pruned back to keep them within bounds.

Blackberry and raspberry bushes that were not pruned last year should have the dead wood cut out now, and this should be burned.

Autumn flowering Gladioli, Indian Summer.

The young canes of raspberry bushes, not including the purple varieties such as Columbian, should be allowed to grow without spring pruning or pinching as suggested for blackberries and black raspberries. Pinching encourages suckers. Cut the bushes back to three feet high in the early spring. Those trained to trellises may be longer.

Currants and gooseberries should be pruned just sufficiently to keep the bushes open, taking out the old wood, which becomes exhausted and produces inferior fruit. Keep the bushes shapely with the branches well off the ground.

In this article the bulletin on pruning by W. H. Chandler and H. B. Knapp of the New York College of Agriculture has been followed in arrangement, as the supply of that bulletin is understood to be low. The practices suggested, however, were in most cases in use before New York had a State Agricultural College.

Shade trees should only be pruned to keep them in form and to prevent one limb interfering with another. As a rule the less the saw and knife are used on ornamental trees the better. Shrubs, as a rule, should be pruned after flowering, as the flowers are produced on the wood of the previous season's growth.

THE GLADIOLI WIZARD.

A. E. Kunderd of Goshen, Ind., asked for the story of how and when he started growing gladioli, says it was so long ago he does not remember. It has been a life work inspired by the love of nature and especially the wish to produce something new and distinctly different from anything previously known.

Mr. Kunderd was the originator of the ruffled gladiolus and many others, including the giant fall blooming in both plain and ruffled petals and the popular Mrs. Frank Pendleton, the result of twenty-five years work of scientific crossing and selection.

Indian summer, one of the race, flowering race, comes into bloom a month later than other late varieties planted at the same time. The spikes have six to eight massive ruffled flowers open at a time. The color is light lavender rose pink on a white ground. It is a seed bearing hybrid, which makes it valuable to the gladioli breeder. Only one bulb will be sold to a customer this season at $35 each. Other varieties are offered as low as $1.50 a dozen.

Get the seed and nursery catalogues and study them. They are interesting and filled with useful information.

Those who have the ground for a garden and the time to care for it should make the most of the opportunity. Plant only what can be properly cared for and harvested. To sow a quantity of seeds and not care for them is wasteful and seeds are scarce. Every seed this year should be made to produce.

The indications now are that all vegetables will be high in price the coming season. Last autumn many acres of potatoes were left in the fields, as farmers were unable to procure sufficient labor to harvest them. The same was true with cabbages. Vegetables that were stored were not sufficiently protected to withstand the very severe and prolonged cold winter and have been frozen. Labor is so scarce that many market gardeners and farmers interviewed find it necessary to greatly reduce the acreage usually planted. All this points to high prices.

On small plots only vegetables for immediate consumption should be considered, such as lettuce, radishes, tomatoes, peas, &c., according to the size of the plot. On large plots root crops such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, parsnips can be grown, and these stored for winter use extends the economy of the garden over a much longer period.

MORE FERTILIZERS AND INSECTICIDES QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

In an interview one of the largest manufacturers of insecticides stated that more than 100 large orders for insecticides for Southern farmers and market gardeners were held up in a city of the South by the freight embargo.

Insects and diseases work rapidly, and unless insecticides are applied immediately when needed the crops are lost. The United States Department of Agriculture has labored long and industriously to have this generally understood and observed, but if the railroads cannot deliver the chemicals from the points of production to the places where they are needed the labor has been in vain.

The slogan "Food will win the war" has been spread throughout the land. The opposite must also be true, and if the food is not produced we lose, regardless of the success of all other war measures and preparations. It is manifestly plain, then, that farmers must have insecticides and fertilizers without delay to obtain the full value of the labor of those remaining on the farms. This grave matter will no doubt receive the prompt attention of the commissioners. Just a little too late means disaster.

Spray machines and all farm machinery should be forwarded with the least possible delay.

It has been proposed to fix the price of insecticides as the price of coal was fixed. In doing this, if it is done, great care should be exercised to see that there is no rebound as there was in the matter of coal.

Insecticides and fertilizers are sold largely on the basis of crops. That is, the farmer who has use for all the ready cash he can command from the present time until the crops are harvested and sold buys on credit and pays at harvest season. Approximately 80 per cent. of the insecticide output has been sold by the manufacturers to dealers or has been contracted for at present prices.

If the price is fixed at cost to the dealer he will assume no risk and demand cash on delivery. Not being able to pay cash many farmers will try to do without and their crops will be correspondingly reduced. If the price is fixed below the price at which they were purchased the goods will go back to the manufacturers and the farmers will be unable to get them at all. The shortage will be the same as the shortage of coal.

This is a delicate situation that deserves careful consideration and handling, or much more harm than good may result.

State Senator Elon R. Brown made an investigation into agricultural conditions in western New York and reports that farmers cannot get seed, fertilizers or insecticides because of the freight embargo and that serious conditions will result if the difficulty is not corrected in time for April planting. Wheat is being fed to cattle, hogs and sheep in eleven wheat growing counties because corn is not brought into that section.

Beekeepers were appealed to by the bureau of entomology of the Department of Agriculture to increase the production of honey to help meet the shortage of sugar. The response was prompt and the season's production large and of splendid quality.

Agriculture is an art truly noble and capable to ennoble its worthy professors, most of which are so generous and communicative that they take an extreme pleasure in letting the whole world see their works, and when they happen to make any prosperous experiments, they have no greater joy than to declare to such as have a mind to know them the means they used to succeed in it, whereas commonly the humor of other artists is to make a mystery of all things, and disingenuously to keep themselves alone the discoveries they have made in their art.—*Xenophon.*

Gardeners, amateur or professional, who have had good results with original ideas and practices, or arrangement or treatment of plants, can help and encourage others by writing to THE SUN, Garden Department, explaining the matter for publication.

Stocks can be used for so many purposes that they are favorites with every English gardener. The foliage is attractive, the flowers fragrant over a long blooming period. They are unsurpassed for bedding, edging, for pot culture and for cut flowers.

For early flowers sow the seed the last of February, using well drained, shallow boxes of light soil, to which may be added with good results a little crushed mortar from an old building.

Sow the seed, being careful to use only a small quantity, and cover by the merest sprinkling of fine soil. Place the boxes near the glass, with warmth sufficient to keep out the frost. Pricking off must be done before the seedlings become crowded.

In May transfer to deep, rich beds in the garden, into which lime has been worked. Set the plants a foot apart. Transplanting the seedlings frequently tends to make the plants compact.

For late flowers sowings may be made in the open ground in May, and if the plants that start to flower late are carefully potted they will flower all winter in the house.

SCHOOLBOYS ON FARMS.

Patriotic boys last year volunteered for farm work. High school boys were permitted to work on farms the last two months of the school term and received full school credit.

One employer of some of these boys, a New Jersey market gardener, complains that the boys were only after their school credits, for after getting them they quit work just when the weeds were at their worst.

Many years ago, in the office of one of the most popular periodicals of that day, the New York *Ledger*, there hung over a roller the customary long revolving office towel. One day when a young man in the office was using that article of public utility Rufus Dyer, the venerable editor, came up, grasped the underlying fold and by way of apology remarked: "Like every other question, there are two sides to it," and it was Mr. Dyer's custom always to consider the other side. So with boys on the farm, it is a question having two sides.

There are boys of course who go to the country for fun and who can be of but little or no value to the farmer, but there are also serious boys, who want to do what they can to help in the present crisis. They are only boys after all and must be treated as boys. If not used to hard work they must be broken in gradually and, they require long sleeping hours. Gradually their muscles will harden and they will be able to do more and more, and properly encouraged they will be proud of what they accomplish. It is wrong to overwork and discourage boys of this kind.

A young man of about 20 years of age having a desire to become a market gardener was advised to obtain a position with this particular New Jersey market gardener. The position was secured and the city boy was immediately put at man's work, loading heavy barrels of produce on market wagons and given long hours and a hard, uncomfortable bed to sleep on. He stood it for three weeks, then returning home was confined to his bed for a week and it was another week before he could get about comfortably. Soon afterwards this young man operated a good sized farm successfully for himself, pretty good evidence of where the fault was and why the schoolboys left last year as soon as they could.

FLOOD DANGER.

If some of the pork barrel money spent in building post office buildings many times larger than required in towns all over the country and other equally unnecessary expenditures were cut out the money might be used to effectively protect the country permanently from the annual floods causing frightful loss of life and property and greatly curtailing the production of farm crops. The matter has been discussed by Congress for years, but having few farmers in that branch of the Government practically nothing has been accomplished and the annual loss goes on as usual.

Reports from farmers in various parts of the country show great anxiety, and if their fears are realized the floods this year will do more damage than ever before.

FREE SEEDS.

The Government, urging everybody to economize, might set a good example this year by cutting out the money wasted on free seeds sent out miscellaneously by Congressmen, burdening the mails at a time when the railroads are clogged and should not be compelled to carry an unnecessary piece of merchandise.

Not only is this a clear waste of money, but the Government coming in the market when seeds are scarce tends to force the price up, compelling seedsmen to pay more for their goods, which additional price, of course, is passed along and comes out of the pocket of the consumer. The purchase of seeds by the Department of Agriculture this year has taken out of the market seeds that farmers and gardeners needed badly and distributed them in a manner where a large percentage will be wasted. It is a case of don't do as I do, but do as I say, or it is easier to give advice than to follow good precepts.

NOTHING BUT LEAVES.

How much longer will property owners continue to plant elm, maple and sycamore trees and calmly rake nothing but leaves each fall? Among the discerning ones is H. A. Henneman, who planted four English walnuts, two at the curb and two in his back yard, in his Portland, Oregon, city lot twelve years ago. In 1916 the trees bore 80 pounds of nuts; last fall 165 pounds. His revenue from the four trees last fall was $70, and he had leaves to rake if he wanted to besides!—*American Nut Journal.*

Petunias do well in dry situations when once established, also verbenas, gaillardias, antirrhinums, zinnias, portulacas, marigolds and mesembryanthemums. All these like sunshine and grow well in a deep, rich soil and rarely fail to succeed. By pegging down the verbenas they can be made to thickly cover a large space.

For the eleventh consecutive year H. Cecil Sheppard, Berea, Ohio, with his Anconas made a clean sweep at the last Madison Square Garden Poultry Show, winning nine firsts, eight seconds, five thirds, five fourths and three fifths; also both gold specials for best displays in rose and single comb classes.

AMERICA'S GREATEST FLOWER SHOW.

The New York Flower Show will be held this year as usual at Grand Central Palace, March 14 to 21 inclusive, under the auspices of the Horticultural Society of New York and the New York Florists Club. The American Rose Society's annual meeting and exhibition will be held in conjunction with the flower show, insuring a larger display than ever. The general arrangement of the show will be entirely new, and some of the largest exhibitors will occupy fully double their last year's space.

Back yard gardens will be shown, and both amateur and professional gardeners will learn much by attending the show.

The Red Cross tea garden, in charge of ladies prominent socially, always well patronized, deserves more liberal support than ever and will no doubt receive it. Keep the dates in mind, March 14 to 21.

PERENNIALS FROM SEEDS.

Those who have a conservator, gently heated, can begin sowing seeds of perennials for plants to set out in the spring that will bloom during summer. Some will germinate in a temperature of 50 degrees, but will require more heat as soon as they are up.

The seeds should be sown in shallow boxes filled almost to the top with good light soil containing plenty of sand. The boxes should not be more than two or three inches deep. Sow thinly, dropping the seeds on a level surface, and use sifted, dry soil to cover them, one-eighth of an inch being sufficient. Press firmly with a flat piece of wood.

Antirrhinum, aquilegia, hollyhock, lupin, delphinum, pansy, campanula, digitalis, valerian and other perenial seeds will germinate freely and supply a great lot of plants for the coming season.

The seedlings must be grown steadily, transplanted into other boxes and finally hardened by gradual exposure prior to setting them in the open ground. When it is possible try the dwarf as well as the tall sorts.

THE VALUE OF THE TRAPNEST.

By H. R. MATHEWS.

Perhaps there is no single factor which has played so important a part in the past few years in stimulating the production of better poultry than the trapnest. By the use of this device hundreds of farms have been able to reduce their expenses by one-half and at the same time have kept up their egg production. This has been made possible by careful selection of the layers and the drones, resulting in the elimination of the latter from the poultryman's flock. Formerly it was necessary to feed 1,000 hens composed of an equal number of heavy laying, profitable birds and worthless, non-laying hens. Now that the trapnest shows exactly what every hen lays in the course of the year, the flock of 1,000 hens may safely be reduced to 500 or 600 without any appreciable decrease in egg production.

The saving in feed alone by this method of selection is a great item and this, together with the saving in labor, makes it an economic duty with the poultryman to trapnest his flock, or, if unable to devote the time to this work, it is important that he raises nothing but trapnested stock. There are a number of well known breeders who have followed the trapnest system of breeding for a number of years. Their equipment has enabled them to offer the back-yard poultryman a strain of fowls that he would be unable to develop in years. Every bird raised from this superior ancestry will inherit the heavy laying qualities which are so essential to-day.

Do your bit Mr. Poultryman! See that your 1918 hens are the trapnested kind.

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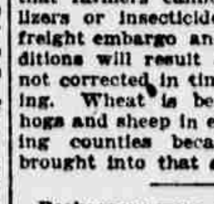

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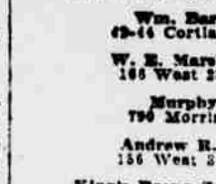

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