UNITED STATES TO BE NATION OF CHILDREN IN THE GARDEN

The Bureau of Education in Washington, through the United States School Garden Army, has received during the past week returns from the southern belt of the country that promise the greatest season of home gardens yet recorded.

Spring landed from the Gulf stream before New Year's day, and the gardens of southern Texas and Florida are planted and already under cultivation.

The slow but certain progress northward has begun, and in New York we are now in that psychological state where the amateur gardener is ordering his season's supply of seeds and is planting his garden plot on paper.

This year school supervised gardens will break all records, the United States School Garden Army estimating that it has already doubled its million and a half enrolment of last year.

The popularity of this "child in the garden" movement has been remarkable under the stimulus of high food prices. Two years ago school gardens had been organized in 700 American cities. In 1918 they were to be found in 4,390 cities and towns and extended from the Philippine Islands upon the east—it is not generally known that 100,000 children are in our colonial schools there—to Porto Rico on the west, where 100,000 pupils have enlisted for next season's garden work; and, of course, there was a whole continent of gardens between. Not the least interesting garden in this whole vast extent was that directed by an American teacher in the Hawaiian Islands, who reported that 85 per cent. of her pupils, who were Japanese, Korean, part Chinese, part Hawaiian, Portuguese and American, raised vegetables last summer in the hope of contribution to the world's food supply. I trust this fact will not escape the attention of those few of our cities that have not, even under the appeal of the present, recognized that the boy at school has a right to an acquaintance with that soil for which he may some day so willingly fight.

The fact that the Government itself is now proposing to take over the general direction of school garden work, providing standardized lessons, fall and spring manuals, posters for school rooms, and insignia bars for the children, will not obscure the fact that we owe a debt of recognition to women's clubs, the Junior Red Cross, Chambers of Commerce and kindred organizations for financing thousands of gardens before local boards of education were ready to assume the responsibility. And yet it was, after all, the personal interest of the school teacher that really made possible last year that chain of little gardens that began, say, in the twenty acres of Franklin Park, Boston, cultivated by 2,500 children with gratifying success, and extended to the Pacific Ocean, under the smiling sun of California.

Those who may have chanced to be in Lexington, Ky., on a certain lovely day in April last year will remember the unique parade of the children who had just enlisted in the garden army: a regiment of 2,000 negro children marching to music in the morning, and 5,000 white children in the afternoon.

"Well," it may be said, "marching and cheering does not necessarily raise sweet potatoes."

It did in this case; or rather it produced a great many other things. By the end of the summer Supt. M. A. Cassidy was able to report that 371 acres of otherwise idle land had been tilled by these children. Many of them had managed a quarter of an acre, and the girls were not much behind the boys, for there were numerous records like that of Lydia P. Roberts, who had a plot 100 by 70 feet on West Third street, and Grace Veal, who cultivated a garden 200 by 100 at 420 Alford street.

In a Louisville (Ky.) school, on the other hand, eighty-two children made their little gardens upon a single quarter acre, on which they raised $81.80 of produce; while in Danville, Ky., a negro school cultivated an acre and made it produce $298.50 at a cost of $85, and of the vegetables thus raised 500 quarts were canned for future use.

But there is a more interesting phase of this work than the mere computation of vegetables and their value in dollars. What is the reaction from this garden work upon the children themselves? Miss Zettan Gordon, writing from Reading, Pa., where the number of children enrolled for garden work was 3,500 in 1916 and had been increased to 7,000 in 1918, says:

"The home garden under the supervision of the school teacher has become a most important factor in the moral, social and agricultural education of the children. It has certainly come to stay. In a year or two a school laddie or lassie without a garden will be unknown. Next year's slogan is 'No child without a garden.'"

And note this single entry, one of many, in the record of the season's work at Mount Florence School, Peekskill, N. Y., where, when war had swept from the broad acres about it all but one farm laborer, 150 girls formed a company of the garden army and raised their own food for the winter.

"We observed Liberty Day by clearing a large field of stones and weeds. These latter made a good breakfast for our sixty rabbits, which are being raised for our Sunday dinners. We found ten fine seedlings of cherry and peach trees and one good willow. With these we intend to start a U. S. S. G. nursery on a fine little plot with southern exposure. As a recreation we spent a half hour gathering wild violets."

Or turn to the account of the Carrol garden in Philadelphia—and it may be said here that none of these letters quoted were prepared for publication, but merely as the record of accomplishment—the Carrol garden, "situated back of the dilapidated looking old Carrol school building in Richmond, has become a joyous spot of verdure near trolley tracks, poor dwellings and innumerable broken bricks of the school yard. The garden this year was unique, because for the first time in its history it was unmolested by toughs. The silent, steadfast work of teachers and pupils made their appeal."

It was only a quarter acre lot, "absolutely littered with old rags, tin cans and bottles, when first reclaimed for a garden." It was cleared and fertilized "with street sweepings, old manure and a scant amount of lime." The first crop yielded Swiss chard, radishes, beets, beans, kohlrabi, carrots and spinach. "But the second crop was simply astonishing in its yield. A truck and a half of produce was sent to soldiers and sailors invalided home, and an ambulance load went to another hospital. You see we were working for the Government, and my kiddies in the garden thought it was wonderful when letters came to them from Washington."

To those who still delight in figures as the true indicator of what has been accomplished, there is abundant information now available in Washington in the form of garden reports. Citing but a few cases from the single State of New York, cities of the class of Ithaca, Haverstraw and Le Roy, with populations of from 15,000 to 3,700 and with special problems of soil and supervision, were able to record $1,000 worth of vegetables raised and consumed, and several hundred quarts put away for the winter. The little gardens of Amsterdam yielded 10,000 cans, all prepared in the school community kitchens.

New Rochelle, with four large school gardens and 660 home gardens, obtained $2,500 from the former alone. Elmira raised on four and a half acres $3,000 consumed at home, $1,000 canned and $500 sold. Watertown, with 117 children on sixteen acres, carried home $3,000 and sold $1,000 more. Troy, with admirable gardens supervised by a director and six paid assistants, produced $11,370 in the school gardens alone.

It has come about literally that we are now teaching the children to love the land for which they will fight.

LEWIS E. MACBRAYNE,
Director United States School Garden Army in New York State.

A NEW YORK SCHOOL GARDEN.

A SOLDIER OF THE U.S.S.G.A. AND HIS GARDEN.

HORTICULTURAL IMPORT PROHIBITION.

After June 1 no plants or bulbs can be imported into the United States except lily bulbs, lily of the valley, hyacinths, tulips, narcissus and crocus, fruit tree stocks, seedlings, cuttings of fruit trees and rose stocks. Why these are admitted cannot be understood. It would have been so simple to have made a clean sweep in these days when we seem to be getting used to being regulated and prohibited.

One fact that we lose sight of is that if one thing can be prohibited another may be also.

Benjamin Franklin, in his autobiography, tells how one of his ancestors made a stool with a hinged top. Under this top the Bible was strapped. When it was read one of the children was stationed at the door to give notice in case the proctor appeared, so it might be quickly returned to its hiding place. Reading the Bible was then prohibited by law.

Franklin's father determined to go to America, where he hoped to enjoy free exercise of his religion. Even the free exercise of religious beliefs may be restricted if we keep on at the pace we are going.

All such things as azaleas, spiræas, dracenas, boxwood, orchids and bulbs such as scillas, snowdrops, crown imperials and so on, are absolutely "streng verboten."

The Federal Horticultural Board has issued this proclamation. Whether it is constitutional or not seems to be a question. Can it be that after all our Constitution is now only a "scrap of paper"?

Every section is at least supposed to be represented in Washington by a Congressman and the Congressman has the means of finding out whether the board of five men in Washington has the power to enforce this regulation. If so it should be regulated by some higher authority. Write your Congressman, expressing your views in this matter.

Bellis rotundifolia caerulescens, or blue daisy, does not seem to be listed in any of the American seed catalogues. This plant is not common in England, but the American seedsmen can order seeds in England for gardeners here who desire it. It will take from three weeks to a month to obtain the seed.

The flowers in England are white, more or less deeply tinted with blue or lilac. It is the nearest to blue in the daisy family.

In this country the blue may be more or less pronounced. This can only be learned by testing it and it is work of this kind that interests many amateurs.

The leaves of the plant are soon shaped, tapering at the base. The plants grow three or four inches high. It makes neat and compact tufts and is very dainty when in bloom. It is especially good for rockeries.

The position most suited to this plant is one where it receives a fair amount of sun, with good drainage.

All daisies require a fair amount of water during the summer months.

It is not certain that this variety will be hardy and some plants should be wintered over in cold frames.

Ophiopogon jaburan is an excellent plant for living rooms. The plants are curious and interesting. A variegated variety is evergreen, producing blue flowers, and deep blue berries, about the size of currants. They thrive in sandy soil and enjoy a fairly warm atmosphere. In Italy some varieties are used to form green turf in lieu of grass, which perishes from the heat.

Where there is a good sized garden a wheel hoe will save labor and time. Small gardens can be cultivated better with a hoe.

EVERGREEN HOLLY.

By SUSAN P. OAKIE.

To transfer it successfully from its native bed in the woodland to the lawn is a most difficult piece of work. I never succeeded until I was taught how to do it by an old colored woman in Virginia whose small garden was enclosed in a holly hedge as perfect as those seen in England. She directed me to take up small seedlings very early in the spring, strip their leaves off, plant carefully, cover the ground about them with overturned sod weighted with stones and "tie a wet rag around their heads if you have no bags." You must keep the whole plant from drying out. Water, shade and patience, for they are of slow growth; but great is the reward."

SHALLOW CULTIVATION FOR CORN BEST.

Four bushels of grain and 218 pounds of stover per acre were gained as a nine year average at the Ohio experiment station in favor of shallow cultivation, as compared with deep stirring of the soil for corn.

Corn when small may be cultivated deep. Later deep stirring cuts off many roots and but few more weeds are killed or little more moisture is saved than by shallow cultivation.

A spoonful of fertilizer applied to the hill may give corn a good start, but later fertilizer should be spread over the whole surface of the land, as the roots extend several feet from the plant in all directions.

Acid phosphate is a good fertilizer for corn, used at the rate of 200 pounds to the acre.

An experienced landscape gardener offers to lay out an estate or park anywhere within a reasonable distance of New York city, without cost other than actual expenses. For particulars apply to THE SUN, Garden Department.

The "Soil Improvement Committee" is energetically supplying publications in which they are unwilling to advertise with "news" matter which it is willing to have the papers publish free of charge.

Last year a concern manufacturing a cream separator advertised that their separators, several years old, sold at auction for more than the retail price. Referring to the subject, a correspondent says the buyers at the auction sales were stupid or the company needs a new sales manager able to obtain what the machines are worth.

HOW TO TELL ADULTERATION OF TEXTILES.

Cotton fibres under the miscroscope have a ribbonlike appearance, with frequent twists and a broad flat central canal; linen fibres are round, jointed and heavier than cotton.

A simple test is to light the threads with a match, blow out the flame and examine the burned ends. The cotton threads will have blunt ends, while the linen will be pointed.

An easy way of distinguishing between the highly sized and calendered cotton damask and true linen damask is to boil a sample. After being dried and ironed, if it is cotton it will have a dull and somewhat fuzzy appearance, while the lustre and smoothness of real linen will not be affected by the treatment. Mercerized cotton damask keeps more lustre than untreated cotton, but less than linen.

Linen adulterated with cotton will show the short fibres of the cotton with fuzzy ends, which burn quickly with a flame. Linen threads are strong and when broken the thread is straight and the ends are uneven. If without starch, olive oil makes linen translucent, cotton opaque.

Wool has short fibres, kinky and stiff. They burn slowly and give off an unmistakable odor. To detect cotton adulteration boil five minutes in a 5 per cent. solution of caustic potash. The wool fibres will be destroyed and the cotton remain.

When the gum is removed from silk produced by a silk worm the silk loses from 20 to 30 per cent. of its original weight. To make up for this loss in weight large additions of various substances which do not change the looks, feel or structure of the silk are often made. If no larger an amount than that of the weight of the gum boiled off is added it is considered legitimate, but much silk is made which has as high as from three to four times as much mineral matter added to its original weight. This makes the silk brittle and weak, so that it wears out quickly. It is easy to determine heavily weighted material by burning a small sample. Pure silk burns rapidly, smells like wool and produces a small amount of brittle curled up ash. Material which is heavily weighted will have an ash which is stiff and which often holds the shape of the sample.

Cotton is frequently mixed with silk. Such goods sold as mixtures have many uses. It is easy to detect cotton in silk by the microscope, as the fibres of silk are round and smooth, while the cotton fibres are ribbon like and fuzzy.

Silk may be tested with caustic potash in the same manner as wool. The silk fibres will be destroyed less rapidly than wool.

About 3¾ bushels of potatoes per capita were consumed yearly for all purposes in this country during the ten years preceding the war. The rate per family is almost 17 bushels. About 10 per cent. of the consumption is for seed and starch, mostly for seed.

The need for good roads is the acknowledgment by Government officials that for passenger haul the public roads are used to a greater extent than the railroads. This condition has been created within a single generation.

A community ice house costs little and supplies ice all summer to those who live in the country. It helps develop the proper community spirit also. If interested send to the State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, N. Y., for R. C. F., 135, "The Farm Ice Supply."

Sawdust on the floors of rabbit hutches will keep them free from odor, if cleaned daily.

Never lift rabbits by the ears. It is wrong to handle them in that way. Take them by the loose skin back of the neck and support their weight by placing the other hand under their hindquarters.

EARLY HATCHING FOR HIGH PRICED EGGS.

Fresh eggs are highest in the late autumn and winter. The hens stop laying then and grow a new crop of feathers, and during the moulting period, as it is called, eggs are scarce until the young pullets begin to lay.

The American breeds, Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, Rhode Island Reds, &c., begin to lay when about seven months old. Leghorns, Minorcas, &c., when about six months old.

If the chickens are hatched early in the spring they will begin to lay when the hens are moulting and the eggs high in price.

For late autumn and winter eggs begin hatching March 1. Hatch at intervals and have all the chicks out not later than May 1.

If hens do not want to sit in time, get broody hens from a neighbor or use an incubator.

Keep swine dry and warm.

Bowel diseases often result because too much water is forced upon the fowls in sloppy food. The natural food is seeds, insects and grass, which should be imitated under domestic conditions. Keep fresh water where the birds can get it as it may be required.

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Free with Each Order.

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QUICK RESULTS

The advertisement referred to below will be found on this page. It appeared for the first time last Sunday, February 2. Three days later, February 5, the advertiser writes:

"We have received requests for our catalogue showing the ad is already 'working'—Please send copy of paper."

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PURE HONEY (buckwheat or clover honey) 3 lb. can, $1.35; 6 lb. can, $2.40; 12 lb. can, $4.25. Apple Butter, per gal., $2.25. Boiled Cider (4 into 1) qt., 60 cts.; 2 qts., $1; gal., $1.75, postpaid. F. J. Stillmaster & Wife, Ebensburg R. D. 1, Pa.

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Barred Rocks, White Rocks, Reds and White Wyandottes, $12 per 100; absolutely superior, vigorous stock; full count and safe arrival guaranteed; catalog. BROOKS FARMS, South Easton, Mass.

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