THE HERALD.

AGRICULTURAL.

Sweet Potato Culture.

SOIL AND PREPARATION.

Almost any soil will grow sweet potatoes. Some kinds do better on certain soils than others; but, on the whole, I find all kinds do best on rather dry soils containing a considerable amount of clay, and if enriched with manure, the yield will be greater in proportion. To have the soil in proper condition at planting time, it should have been plowed once or twice during the spring and rolled, and so prepared as to be as free from clods as possible. I find it best to plant in ridges, which should be about three and a half feet from center to center, and about fourteen inches high.

PLANTING.

The plants should be dropped but a short distance ahead of the planters, ten to fourteen inches apart, on freshly-made ridges. The planter should be provided with a bright, sharp mason's trowl, which he grasps in his right hand, straddles the ridge, picks up a plant with his left hand, pushes the trowel into the earth in a slanting direction, opens a hole by a drawing and lifting motion, opening a space about an inch wide, thrusts the plant in with the left hand, withdraws the trowel and presses the earth firmly to the plant with the right hand, putting his weight on the arm, without letting go the trowel, and while doing so picks up another plant with his left hand ready to repeat the operation.

I have found this the fastest and every way the best manner of proceeding. Great care must be observed to have the plants well firmed; the earth can not be pressed too close to the roots of any plant, while if not well firmed, and dry weather follows, the plant is almost sure to be lost.

AFTER-CULTIVATION.

The proper performance of this is of the greatest importance; without it, all previous care and expense will avail nothing. I have found it the best, and by far the cheapest, never to allow the weeds to get a start; as soon after every rain as the soil is fit to work, the ground should be stirred with some implement, be it rake, hoe, plow or harrow, so as to destroy the weeds as soon as they have germinated, when the least stirring and a half hour's sun will kill beyond resurrection. My ridges are made by a machine built for the purpose, hence all are alike, which enables me to cultivate both sides of the ridges at one operation with a steel harrow made to fit the ridges and drawn by two horses. The space at the bottom between the ridges is cleaned by one passage of the shovel-plow—thus there is only a narrow strip on the top of the ridges to be cleaned by hand labor. Two or three such workings are about all that can be accomplished, and are sufficient; by that time the plants will be growing so rapidly as to cover the ground in a short time and prevent all further growth of weeds. Whatever plan or instrument is used, it is of the greatest importance to never let the weeds get a start, as a man can do at least four times as much while they are under half an inch high as he can after they are over two.

DIGGING

is a costly operation as performed by many persons. The best and most expeditious way I have yet tried is to take a large two or three horse plow; set it as much to land as possible; attach a rolling coulter, setting it to land about two inches; straddling ridge with your team and turn it over with the plow. The coulter will cut the vines completely if kept sharp, and the plow inverts the whole ridge. The potatoes remain hanging together on the vine, and the points sticking up, and by taking hold of one the whole hill can be pulled up. They should be broken off from the vines, sorted and laid in piles. The greatest care must be observed not to bruise the potatoes, as the bruises cause rotting soon after.—E. A. Riehl, in *Rural World.*

Swine Management.

A correspondent of the Cincinnati Gazette writes: First, as to breeding sows. They should, as a general rule, be kept by themselves, and where they can have a good range. Sufficient exercise seems essential to their progeny. Matured sows have better and stronger pigs than gilts, and should be separated from young sows. And for this reason, a yearling past or a two-year-old sow can eat a great deal faster than the gilts. Therefore, if the two kinds are kept together for breeding purposes, the matured sow will become too fat to do well, and the gilt, or young sow, will lack the food so essential to her growth and perfect development.

Every farmer should have a hog-house for hogs. They should be put into it about the 1st of December, and taken out the last of March or 1st of April. The hog-house should be well ventilated, and have a tight roof by all means; for, without it and a good floor, it would be worse than no house at all, for the reason that they should sleep dry and be free from dust or wet. And, having a good floor to sleep on, they will not smother each other. In cold weather, for the purpose of warmth, they should be bedded with good wheat straw. But as often as once in three or four weeks, the old bedding should be removed, scattered out on the field, or putting it on the manure pile. This use of wheat straw will make it pay largely for the cost of bedding. Fifteen or twenty stock hogs are enough to bed together. A hog-house may be twenty feet long and eight feet wide, and divided in the middle, adjoining the partition. Such a house will comfortably accommodate forty shoats; and if their house be kept clean, they will naturally occupy both apartments.

Oil the Harness Now.

A good harness is costly, but if properly used and cared for will last a good many years. If neglected, it will soon need repairs, and in a short time become utterly worthless. In caring for a harness, one great point is to see that it is kept suitably oiled. A work harness in use on a farm should be oiled twice each year, in the spring and fall. It should be taken entirely apart, the places where sweat and dirt have collected cleaned with a chip, or an old case-knife, then wash clean in warm water in which a little castile soap has been dissolved. As they are washed the straps should be hung on a pole to dry. When the outside is nearly dry, but before the moisture is all out of the leather, the oil should be applied. This may be done with a clean paint brush, which is the best thing for the purpose, a sponge or a woolen cloth. A moderate quantity should be used; and, if it does not soften the leather enough, another light coat may be applied when the first one is well dried in. This is better than to put on a great deal at once. Care should be taken to obtain a good quality of oil. Poor oils are of little use, and sometimes are injurious. Neat's foot is the very best kind of oil for leather.

Growing Cucumbers for Pickles.

I find cucumbers a paying crop when grown for pickles, and sold either before or after salting—price per hundred the same in either case. I plow as deep as two horses can pull the plow, then mark one way four feet apart, letting the plow run as deep as the ground was plowed. I then put a shovelful of good barnyard manure where each hill is wanted, say four feet apart, and then thoroughly mix with the soil, making the hills about two inches higher than the general surface of the ground. I plant about the middle of June.

As soon as the plants get large enough to be out of the way of the striped bug, I thin out to four plants to the hill. I cultivate them frequently, and hand-hoe them two or three times before the vines commence to run. In this vicinity the price ranges from 50 cents to $1 per hundred, and the product of an acre sells from $400 to $800.—*Cor. Country Gentleman.*

About Sick Animals.

Nearly all sick animals become so by improper feeding, in the first place. Nine cases out of ten the digestion is wrong. Charcoal is the most efficient and rapid corrective. It will cure a majority of cases, if properly administered. An example of its use: The hired man came in with the intelligence that one of the finest cows was very sick, and a kind neighbor proposed the usual drugs and poisons. The owner being ill, and unable to examine the cow, concluded that the trouble came from overcating, and ordered a teacup of pulverized charcoal given in water. It was mixed, placed in a junk bottle, the head held upward, and water and charcoal poured downward. In five minutes improvement was visible, and in a few hours the animal was in the pasture quietly eating grass. Another instance of equal success occurred with a young heifer which had become badly bloated by eating green apples after a hard wind. The bloat was so severe that the sides were almost as hard as a barrel. The old remedy, saleratus, was tried for correcting the acidity. But the attempt to put it down always caused coughing, and it did little good. Half a teacupful of fresh powdered charcoal was given. In six hours all appearance of bloat had gone, and the heifer was well.

Thinning Corn.

Prof. Roberts, of the Cornell University, made some experiments in growing corn upon the college farm last season, the results of which are valuable. He planted three plats of three-sixteenths of an acre each with corn, and thinned the hills in one lot to three stalks, another to four stalks to a hill; the third was not thinned. The first plat yielded at the rate of 160 bushels, the second 125 bushels, and the third 106 bushels (of ears) to the acre. Mr. Roberts states, as the result of many experiments prior to these, at the Iowa Agricultural College, that the heaviest crops of corn were made by growing three stalks to a hill, and that two stalks to a hill will produce more than five stalks. If every stalk produces an ear, and corn is planted three feet apart each way, there will be nearly 100 bushels of shelled grain per acre. To grow maximum crops of corn, then, it is only necessary to grow one ear upon a stalk, and ears of such a size that a hundred of them will make a bushel of grain. In view of this, it is strange that, with so prolific a grain as corn, a yield of 100 bushels to the acre should be considered as something almost impossible to be obtained.—*Am. Agriculturist.*

A Particular Hen.

Capt. Jacob W. Dobois has a hen of the golden pheasant breed which is very particular as to her place of laying. She always comes in the house and makes for a certain closet, where she arranges a nest, quietly deposits her egg, and goes off with a happy, contented little cackle. If she finds the doors and windows closed, she will walk around from one to the other until she attracts some one's attention and is admitted. When she comes into the house she behaves in the most circumspect manner, like a well bred fowl, as she is, and never says anything to anybody, or gets in any one's way. The hen has a mate in a little rooster, who accompanies her about the premises, escorts her to the house, and quietly waits for her until she makes her exit, and then wanders off happy and proud in her companionship.—*Kingston (N. Y.) Freeman.*

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

VINEGAR PIE.—One teacup of molasses, one of sugar, half a cup of good vinegar. Thicken with flour, or an egg, and then bake it with two crusts.

To remove old paint, cover with a wash of three parts quick limestone, slacked in water, to which one part pearl-ash is added. Allow the coating to remain for sixteen hours, when the paint may be scraped off.

GERMAN TOAST.—To one egg, beaten well, add one cup sweet milk or cream; season with a little salt and pepper. Cut in slices stale bread, and put in the milk to moisten, and fry in butter on a griddle. This is an extra nice dish for breakfast.

LETTUCE SALAD.—Most housekeepers use vinegar, vinegar and sugar, or vinegar and meat gravy for lettuce, but sour cream from sloppered milk and sugar, added to the lettuce after it is cut up fine, makes a most delicious and healthy salad.

SPONGE CAKE.—Six eggs, four cups flour, three cups sugar, one cup water, one teaspoonful soda, two teaspoonfuls cream of tartar; flavor with lemon. Beat the eggs and sugar together until very light, then add soda dissolved in water, and the cream of tartar mixed thoroughly with the flour.

For table furnishing, glass is now more fashionable than silver, and plain white china is quite out of fashion. Minton ware—an English china—with surface in broad ornamented bands of chocolate brown, is much in vogue; but crockery in color—dark blue—all the majolica hues and designs, plates covered with leaves, birds, flowers, landscapes, beasts, and fishes—with cake, fruit and desert plates—all odd, unique devices seem to be the demand of to-day.

Bay rum is a useful, agreeable and inexpensive application to the scalp. Everybody should use it, so we will give a formula for making it as good as can be purchased anywhere, and at a small cost: Take oil of bay, ten fluid drams; oil of pimento, one fluid dram; acetic ether, two fluid ounces; alcohol, three gallons; water, two and a half gallons. Mix, and in two weeks filter it carefully, when you will have a superior article of bay rum, better than can be purchased at an extravagant price, already prepared.

In furnishing windows, waste no money on paper shades. If there are no shutters get shades of dark, heavy Holland, or in oil, if there are shutters. White muslin on rollers are the best. To the cornice of the window may be added a lambrequin in color and material to match the mantel and brackets; it may be well to add that lambrequins should be lined, as the sun would otherwise soon fade the material. The addition of lace or gauze curtains is a matter of fancy. In a room of common use, they are often of more trouble than worth; moreover, anything that keeps out the sun and light should not be patronized. It is a great mistake to keep a room in profound darkness for any reason.

The leaves of geranium are an excellent application for cuts, when the skin is rubbed off, and other wounds of the same kind. One or two leaves must be bruised and applied on linen to the part, and the wound will become cicatrized in a very short time.