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Farm and Garden

WHEN TO CUT ALFALFA.

Watch For the Appearance of the Bloom is the General Rule.

The general rule for cutting alfalfa is to watch for the appearance of the bloom and cut when at least a tenth of the blossoms are out, says the Kansas Farmer.

Alfalfa will mature several crops in one season, but to secure the largest yields it must be cut when the growth has ceased and the plant is getting ready to send up new shoots from the crown. This stage usually coincides with the appearance of the blossoms, but it is not best to depend entirely on the appearance of the blossoms. In some seasons these are delayed and the shoots start before the blooms appear. Experienced alfalfa growers



CUTTING ALFALFA.

are familiar with this habit of the plant, but beginners with this crop perhaps have not learned to watch for the appearance of these new shoots or buds. The crop should always be cut when the buds first appear. It is an indication that the present crop will not grow any more, and if cutting is delayed until new shoots are high enough to be mowed the next crop will receive a severe setback. The shoots will not go on growing after the tops have been cut. They become dormant, and before there can be another crop new shoots must start from the crown.

Deep Cultivation For Potatoes.

Deep cultivation should be given the ground planted to potatoes before the plants make their appearance, advises F. S. Merrill, assistant horticulturist in the Kansas State Agricultural college. This is the deepest cultivation that should be given, as later there is danger of injuring the roots.

Cultivation should be frequent to keep the weeds down. One of the most effective tools commonly used for this purpose is the weeder. This should be used as often as possible until the tops of the plants get high enough to be injured by the teeth of the weeder.

Cultivation should be continued until the vines are large enough, so that further cultivation would mean injury to them, points out Mr. Merrill. At the last cultivation dirt should be thrown upon the hills to protect the potatoes from the sun. If the potatoes are not well protected from the sun a green color appears in them, which is said to be poisonous. This affects the quality of the product and produces a disagreeable taste. If the dirt is thrown up well on the hills not only will the growing tubers be protected, but plant food will be liberated.

Sudan Grass.

Sudan grass is a sorghum, but does not grow quite as rank as the ordinary cane sorghum. Being an annual, it must be seeded each year and fits nicely into rotations.

This crop can be sown between corn planting time and the 1st of June. For its best growth it requires plenty of bright weather. If broadcasted about twenty to twenty-five pounds should be used to the acre.

Sudan grass can stand considerable drought. It is not very good as a nurse crop. It makes such a heavy growth as to cut off sun and moisture from the crop it is to foster.

PROTECT THE GARDEN.

The old gardener says to look out for frost in spring or autumn when the sunshine is very hot, the shade very cold and the shadows very deep.

This indicates that the air is dry and radiation little checked.

Making a smudge in the garden at night when the frost is expected and spraying the plants thoroughly with water at the same time will help prevent damage to plants.

Beans, corn, cucumber, eggplant, melons, okra, pepper, pumpkins, squash, sweet potatoes and tomatoes are the vegetables most likely to be damaged by spring frosts.

A little care and work in the evening may save the crop for you.

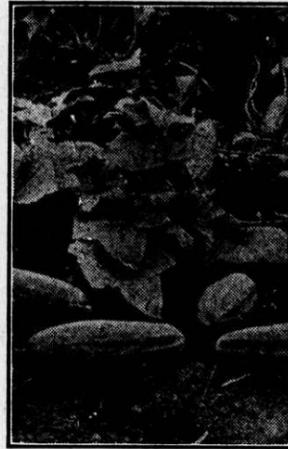
Making the Little Farm Pay

By C. C. BOWSFIELD

Amateur gardeners and farmers who wish to diversify their crops will find cucumbers a fairly safe and profitable product. The sale for this class of commodities is steady in all stages of growth. There is no rush about picking or marketing.

Cucumbers ought to return a net profit of \$200 an acre. A Michigan grower reports \$250 an acre. Grocers, pickle factories and town families will take the output, but the marketing should be arranged for in advance. It is also an easy matter for growers to put up pickles, and this system adds to the profits.

The soil needs to be light, warm and full of vegetable matter. Land that has borne clover is good. It must not



CUCUMBERS ARE A SAFE PRODUCT.

be soggy. In drought periods the vines should be watered daily, but this applies to garden products generally as well as to cucumbers. If the ground is not considered just right it is advisable to use well rotted manure in the hills before planting. The best way is to use well fertilized land that was plowed in the fall, adding a little barnyard manure to the cucumber hills as they are formed. Have the soil worked down fine with harrow or rake and mark out in checks at least four feet each way. Many prefer five or six feet. It is easier to cultivate check rows than single rows. The hill system is preferred because it gives plants more leaf surface. Better drainage is also secured in case of excessive rains.

Four to six seeds should be dropped in each hill and lightly covered with soil. In case of unfavorable weather or uneven growth additional plantings may be made. Second and third plantings can also be made for prolonging the marketing of cucumbers and for raising pickle stock. In order to get an early start seeds may be planted in a hotbed of moderate temperature or in window pots in the dwelling. Planting in the open ground is to be deferred until the soil is in nice order and danger from frost is over. Whatever transplanting is necessary should be done in the evening.

Those who are engaged in this line of gardening on an extensive scale should consult the owners of pickle factories as to prices and time of marketing. The pickle companies sometimes prefer to furnish the seed. When a large crop is to be raised the cultivation can be with an ordinary two horse corn cultivator. Planting in drills seems to be the easier method, in the opinion of some, but the majority of experts think that results are better with the hill system. A corn planter may be used if desired, and the plants may be thinned out as they develop. Seed is generally used at the rate of one ounce to fifty hills.

Insects are often troublesome in cucumber growing. For cutworms use poisoned bran about four inches from where the plants are coming through. For striped beetle dust frequently with plaster, which acts as a repellent. Hellebore powder in water is also effective in destroying the striped bug. During the picking season the vines are gone over regularly at short intervals and the cucumbers removed as soon as they attain marketable size. This will prevent any check in the growth of vines and increase the number of cucumbers that can be secured.

One of the most delicious vegetables is watercress, and yet few farmers or gardeners are trying to utilize the delicacy. No other product grows into money easier or with less trouble. It grows wild in running brooks, in ditches or around fresh ponds. All that is demanded for the raising of cress is pure water. Plant seeds in the soft earth at the edge of the water. The plants will soon fill the bed of the stream or pond. After establishing the growth of watercress it is available for use in March and throughout the season. A large sale can be worked up in any town.

Corn salad is a paying winter product, the small leaves being served like lettuce during the cool fall and early winter months. It is used for garnishing meat dishes and is in good demand. Plant late in the summer for fall and winter use. It is quite hardy and a little protection with leaves will carry it safely through the winter.

Exercise For Sheep.

Sufficient exercise is very necessary to the health of sheep, as it is in the case of all sorts of live stock.

TOM McDOWELL



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