

Farmers' Column.



Give fools their gold & knaves their power. Let fortune's bubbles rise and fall. Who sows a field or trains a flower. Or plants a tree, is more than all.

What Tomatoes to Plant.

I esteem garden vegetables according to their table quality rather than their appearance or productiveness. The surplus of the best is always good enough to sell. In flavor and eating qualities generally there is a wide difference among tomatoes, and I have been trying all the leading varieties for years to settle which one I should choose as the best for my purpose.

Last season I tried a number of the newer kinds, viz.: Acme, Paragon Perfection, Favorite, Mayflower, Rochester, Hundred Day, with a view to test their comparative merits as to earliness, productiveness, quality, etc.

The Hundred Days gave the first ripe fruit, followed by Acme, in a few days, but the difference in time, as shown by this one trial, was so slight as to be insignificant when compared with the superiority of the others.

The Essex Hybrid and St. Paul, introduced a few years ago as great acquisitions, I have discarded after three years' trial. They rot even worse than the Acme, if it is possible, and require to be smothered in sugar to make them palatable.

Professor Caldwell is quoted as saying: "It is a matter of all-day's duration whether it pays to dig muck and use it as a fertilizer. The different results always arise from two sources, an understanding of composting or other preparation, or a failure in the muck itself, not having a sufficient amount of organic substance."

Cooked and Uncooked Food for Swine. Of late years the practice of cooking food for stock has met with little favor, but unless there is some mistake in the figures, the results of an experiment conducted by H. C. Ginnick, of Iowa, seem to prove that the feeding of uncooked meal and bran is most wasteful.

Spring Planting. A good rule to observe in planting trees is to select a time soon after the frost is out of the soil and surface reasonably dry. The earlier the better for most trees, so that the roots may commence working before the buds swell.

Professor Muncy says that it cost last year 19.2 cents to raise a bushel of potatoes on the College farm, in Iowa, and 20 cents to produce a bushel of oats.

A depraved Kansas farmer encourages tipping among his rats by placing some sweetened whisky and water in saucers on the cellar floor. When the rodents get riotously drunk the tempter slays them with a club.

Farm Drainage—Does It Pay?

In the first place we must be well informed of precisely what is to be done before we can estimate the expense of the operation. After we get a general idea of what it costs to drain a given area, the increase of income from that area needs to be computed. The question of profit and loss is then no difficult one to answer. A man can always best find the outlay for any work after it is finished, but if he is cautious he will have approximated to the cost before any money has been expended.

In the first place, let no one forget for a moment that draining is expensive. From the first shovelful of earth removed until the last is returned there is hard work, a great deal of it, and some of it needs to be skillful, and on that account all the more costly.

The cost of draining may be classified under these heads: Digging the trenches, grading the bottom, tile and tile laying, filling the trenches and outlets and basins. The cost of digging will depend upon whether with hand labor entirely or partly with the horse. If the soil is a loamy one, free from all large stones, the trenching of an average depth will not be far from fifty cents per rod.

The cost of draining any given area will depend upon the number of rods per acre. Fifty rods per acre is ample for most wet soils, and at that number the cost would not be far from \$45;—allowing \$5 per acre for outlets and tile basins we have a total of \$50 per acre for the work.

With \$50 per acre as the cost, can it be shown that it is a profitable investment to sink so much money in the soil; in short, will it pay to drain? If the money was deposited in a bank it would draw from 4 to 5 per cent, but we will suppose it may bring 8 per cent in some less safe place.

Drainage is most profitable when a few rods, or a few hundred, remove a wet spot in the midst of otherwise uniformly arable land. The net area is not only unfit for tillage, but its presence obstructs the culture of the other portions of the field. A mry place in a cultivated field is a far greater evil than most farmers generally suppose.

There are many indirect gains which are, nevertheless, important. The removal of the excess of water in early Spring lengthens the farmers season of labor. The Spring rains may be important that his work proceed without interruption. Weeks are lost at a season when they are all too short for the work to be done.

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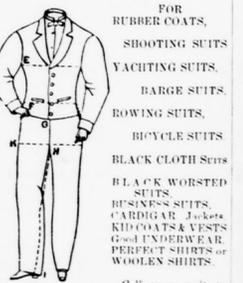
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