

HOW TO GROW ONIONS

(Continued from First Page)

lings or simply pull the tops off the weeds, either of which might go without detection for a week.

CURING THE CROP

When a majority of the tops fall it is a sign of their being ripe. The crop should be pulled and allowed to dry; this will take about a week of dry weather. If a rain occurs it will be necessary to turn the bulbs, which can be done by using a garden rake with dull teeth, but rain is apt to bleach the crop and so damage the sale. This is best prevented by taking the crop to a curing shed, which simply needs a roof to keep the rain off and possibly some movable sides for rain breaks to prevent a driving rain from beating in. The tops should not be removed until they are dry when they break easily and can be stripped off without difficulty. It is usually better to push the crop forward as early as possible. The maturing may be hastened somewhat by knocking the tops over.

As soon as the roots loosen their hold on the ground they may be pulled as there is some danger of their making a second start if the season is rainy. In such a case they must be drawn on and cured quickly. In a dry storing room onions may be kept for a long time to await a favorable market.

CRATING

It is not necessary to use a fine material to make onion crates; the poorer quality left from sorting tomato crates will be found to bring as good a price as the finer ones. In packing, the crates should be well filled to prevent the product from being bruised as they rot very quickly after bruising. All culls should be removed from the field and composted to prevent them from drawing insects and growing fungi.

As Texas has come to the front as an onion growing state in recent years the subject has received a great deal of attention there. The following from the Galveston News therefore will be of more than passing interest to anyone contemplating onion culture. There are some points of difference between these recommendations and the instructions given by Professor Rolfs:

To supply the great demand for information on this subject the following practical points are brought together for the benefit of inquirers:

Varieties—The Bermudas, the Red, the White and the Crystal Wax (the last named being the only pure white Bermuda) are the most productive and satisfactory for general market, although the Creole is held high in favor on account of its superior keeping quality by those who grow for a local market, where the whole crop cannot be disposed of at once.

Seed—The best onion growers of Southwest Texas insist that the imported Bermuda seed is far better than American grown and produces a handsomer product. In any event the best seed of the current year should be secured, as old seed loses all power of growing. The matter of price is unimportant when quality of seed is concerned. Imported seed is grown not on Bermuda Island, as is generally supposed, but on the Tenerife Islands, off the coast of Africa.

Soil—The soil should be rich and in perfect tilth for the best results. The soils of South Texas seem especially adapted to the growth of this crop and new land produces profitable yields without fertilizer or irrigation. Almost any well drained soil, if rich, will grow onions. Where fertilizers are needed from twenty-five to fifty loads per acre of well-rotted barn lot manure should be applied and if commercial fertilizer is to be used, one rich in all the elements of plant food, a high grade, complete fertilizer should be used at the rate of from 500 to 1,500 pounds per acre, according to the needs of the soil. One containing 5 per cent. of nitrogen, 6 per cent. of phosphoric acid and 9 per cent. of potash is considered satisfactory.

Preparation—If possible a crop of cow peas should be turned under deep early in the fall and from then forward until planting time the land should be frequently harrowed. 'As mellow and rich as an onion bed' is the old saying indicative of perfection in soil, fertility and tilth. Get as much of the cultivation done as possible before the crop is planted.

Planting—The seed bed: The seed should be planted as early as it can be obtained from the dealer, usually about the middle to the last of September or early in October. The seed bed should be in good tilth and not too fertile. Plant in beds broadcast or sow by hand in rows about two inches apart. On a commercial scale sow with seed drill in rows ten inches apart, where necessary to irrigate the bed. To secure sufficient plants to supply an acre, planted 15x4 1-2 inches, about three pounds of seed are required. Depth of planting is an important point and may vary from one-fourth to one-half inch, according to the character of the soil. Two methods of irrigation are practiced—first a ridge is thrown up around the seed beds and they are flooded; second, water is led down the middles of the narrow rows by opening a shallow trench with a hoe.

Transplanting—When the plants are half the diameter of a lead pencil they are ready to go to the field. Wet the bed thoroughly, draw the plants and trim the roots with shears or a knife to about one inch and cut the top to about five or six inches in length. Move the plants to field in any convenient carrier and keep moist and shaded while transplanting. To have rows as straight as possible for convenience in cultivating a garden line or marker can be used. Rows should be marked fourteen inches apart and plants set four and one half inches in drill.

Cultivation—Owing to the surface feeding habit of the plant the cultivation should be shallow and frequent. If possible weeds and grass should never be allowed to start. Where irrigation water is used or rain occurs the soil should be stirred as soon as possible thereafter. Too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of perfect cultural methods.

Harvesting—As soon as 80 or 90 per cent. of the tops have fallen the crop is ready to harvest and should be gathered without delay. The onions may be plowed out or pulled by hand, according to character and condition of soil. Gather in windrows and allow the crop to dry, though care must be taken to prevent injury from too long exposure to the hot sun. Remove tops and roots with a sharp knife, grade and crate in field. Unless shipment occurs at once the crates should be carefully removed and stacked in a well ventilated shed. Throughout harvesting special pains should be taken to avoid bruising the tender bulbs as they immediately show the effect of rough handling and soon decay.

Onion Pests—The most common injury reported results from the attack of the thrips, which may infest the crop from the seed beds forward. Their presence is easily detected by the yellow appearance of the top and the sticky feeling of the leaves. Prompt measures must be taken to save the crop and experience has shown that a fine spray of a solution of four pounds of whale oil soap in six gallons of water will control the pest in two applications, provided the very center of the plant receives a thorough dose.

A Mr. A. D. Rust of Hallettsville, Texas, published the following in his paper, the Herald, on the subject of onion culture in his section of the southwest:

Editor Herald:

Dear Sir: In compliance with your request and according to my promise I herewith give you for publication my ideas and experience on onion culture in this section.

First, then to be considered, is the varieties best suited to this soil and climate.

Second, the manner of cultivation and harvesting.

Third, marketing.

BEST VARIETIES TO PLANT

It is almost an infallible rule that the varieties which succeed best in the north fail here. Again, some varieties which succeed well in one section of Texas will not succeed in other sections. My experience is that the Bermuda and Creole are far superior to any other variety. The Bermuda is certainly the finest and most palatable onion grown. It grows larger and yields more than the Creole; is sweet, immeasurably milder and much more tender than the Creole. The only thing yet discovered rendering it less desirable than the Creole is, that while it is a good keeper it will not keep as long under the same conditions. I have kept the Bermuda fully three months without their decaying. We have kept the Creole a year. To counter-balance this defect in the first named, it will yield from fifteen to twenty-five per cent. more than the Creole and is a larger and much handsomer onion and will sell two to one better where its qualities are known. One peculiarity of the Bermuda is, it does not taint the breath when eaten raw or emit that offensive odor which characterizes the Creole during decomposition. I grow both because I can do better with the two than with one. The genuine Bermuda onion seed comes from the Island of Teneriffe and does not reach this country until about September 15th or October 1st.

A WORD OF WARNING

The purchase of good and avoidance of poor seed is very important. The Rock Island Truckers' club was organized over four years ago. We have had many failures; this we generally did because we bought cheap seed. We have since learned to seek for reliable seedsmen instead of cheap seeds. A moment's thoughtful reasoning will convince anyone that cheap seed (too old to germinate, taken from worthless vegetables, old seed with a little good seed mixed with it or otherwise spurious) is the dearest seed we can buy. A failure from poor seed causes discouragement in raising the kind of crop or a particular variety of a kind. I would also warn onion growers against planting seed at the same time the field is treated to commercial fertilizers. When such fertilizers are used they should be used and well mixed with the soil two weeks before the seed is planted, otherwise the heat generated from the chemical action will destroy the germinating power of the seed. I had two pounds of onion seed burnt up this way in my first attempt to raise onions. Better have your seed beds near your house or otherwise protected from birds by some sort of screen. The ravages of the birds in taking the onions from the seed beds when two or three inches high is the reason why I never plant seed directly in the field as many do.

SEED BEDS

Set your drill so as to drop about fifteen or eighteen seeds to the inch and about one inch deep in finely and thoroughly worked beds four feet wide, raised so as to perfect drainage. Drill in rows lengthwise the bed about five inches apart, sow just before a rain or otherwise when there is a good season in the ground. If drouth continues, sprinkle the earth; after drilling cover with some kind of mulch and keep damp to protect from further drouth until young plants begin to show, then remove the mulch at once. I have never been troubled with plants "damping off." Sulphur one-fifth and lime four-fifths sprinkled over the beds just to whiten the ground will prevent that trouble.

TRANSPLANTING

When onions are about the size of a quill or lead pencil remove them to the field, cut roots off to one and a half inches and half the tops and set out about two inches deep, three to five inches apart and about twenty-four to thirty inches between rows for horse

cultivation, and ten to sixteen inches for hand cultivation. The best way I know of for setting plants is to run a horse sled with two sharp runners twenty-four inches apart, drawn through (for a row) so as to cut two gashes two to four inches deep and about one inch wide at surface, into which place the onions. Another way is to run a hand turning plow the proper depth, drop onions in, resting upon the perpendicular side, then rake the earth back against the plants, in all cases firming the earth around them.

HARVESTING

If the field of onions has been kept clean of grass and weeds it will be only fun to harvest them. As soon as the tops begin to die down pretty thoroughly and the bulbs and roots show evidence of maturity they should be pulled, throwing four rows into one. A word of caution with money hanging on it. Bermuda onions, as I have before stated, are tender and sweet and while if handled without bruising they are good keepers, yet if bruised they will begin to decay at that bruise and the reverse is true of the Creole onion—if bruised it has strength to heal itself by drying down. After they have lain in

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El Centro Bakery and Meat Market

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DESERT LAND, FINAL PROOF—NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

United States Land Office, Los Angeles, Cal., July 16th, 1906.

Notice is hereby given that Mary E. Wagner, of Highgrove, Cal., assignee of Samuel A. Hastings, has filed notice of intention to make proof on her desert land claim No. 1961, for the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 24, T. 16 S., R. 13 E., S. B. M. before Register and Receiver at Los Angeles, Cal., on Wednesday, the 5th day of September, 1906.

She names the following witnesses to prove the complete irrigation and reclamation of said land: Clark W. Adair, of Imperial, Cal.; H. J. Wilson, of Silsbee, Cal.; Nellie Pingree, of Highgrove, Cal.; Mrs. Florence Abbott, of El Centro, Cal.

FRANK C. PRESCOTT, Register.

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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior, Land Office at Los Angeles, Cal., July 11th, 1906.

Notice is hereby given that the following-named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the United States Commissioner at his office in San Diego, Cal., on August 28th, 1906, viz:

JOSEPH H. HARPER

Homestead entry No. 10,474, for the NW 1-4, Sec. 28, T 16 S, R 13 E, S.B.M.

He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon and cultivation of said land, viz:

Lois Whitney, of San Diego, Cal.; Eli M. Sheldon, of El Cajon, Cal.; Andrew J. Elliott, of Silsbee, Cal.; Walter Elliott, of Silsbee, Cal.

FRANK C. PRESCOTT, Register.

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DESERT LAND, FINAL PROOF—NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

United States Land Office, Los Angeles, Cal., July 10th, 1906.

Notice is hereby given that Louis H. Cooper, of Redlands, Cal., has filed notice of intention to make proof on his desert-land claim No. 1907, for the S 1-2, Sec. 2, T 16 S, R 15 E, S. B. M., before Register and Receiver, at Los Angeles, Cal., on Wednesday, the 22nd day of August, 1906.

He names the following witnesses to prove the complete irrigation and reclamation of said land:

Frank S. Best, of Holtville, Cal.; A. E. Frost, of Redlands, Cal.; D. W. Wickersham, of Los Angeles, Cal.; W. F. Holt, of Redlands, Cal.

FRANK C. PRESCOTT, Register.

j21-a18

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