

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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Agriculture.

IN THE GARDEN.

Fertilizing and Preparing for Early Vegetables—Views of a Prominent Georgia Trucker.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

As spring approaches we are all of us more or less interested in the garden. We examine with interest the profusely illustrated seed catalogues which are sent broadcast over the land at this season, and in nine cases out of ten, if we have any chance at all to grow a few vegetables, we will sit down and send off an order for seeds. In fact, we are apt to pay more attention to buying seed than we do to preparing our garden spot and having it ready to receive the seed when they come.

I am constantly asked the question "How shall I prepare my garden this spring?" "What fertilizer do you think would be best to use?" As many others are probably asking the same question, I shall try to answer it as best I may, in the present article.

This matter of preparation is most important if our garden is to be a success. It should be deeply plowed, or otherwise worked up as good as possible, being careful to do the work only when the soil is dry enough to crumble, otherwise we may do more harm than good. It is an excellent plan, as soon as this plowing is completed, to give the whole garden an application broadcast, of acid phosphate and muriate of potash at the rate of 1,000 pounds per acre, using 800 pounds acid phosphate to 200 pounds muriate of potash and thoroughly working it in on the surface.

If nitrate of soda is to be used to supply the nitrogen, it should be applied at planting time again after the vegetables are up, as it is very soluble and liable to leach away during heavy rains. If cottonseed meal is used for this purpose, it should be applied two weeks before you are ready to plant, to prevent injury to the seed. We have also found it an advantage to make a second application of meal when nitrate of soda could not be secured on some vegetables, such as cabbage, beets, lettuce and turnips, after they are up and have started to grow. Dried blood may also be applied in the same manner as the meal, using about one-half the quantity if it is high grade.

If it is difficult to get the above materials, a complete high grade fertilizer may be used with equally good results. These early vegetables require considerable potash, and a fertilizer analyzing ammonia 6 per cent., phosphoric acid 5 per cent. and potash 7 per cent. is about right for most of them, with the exception of peas and beans, where one-half the quantity of ammonia will be sufficient with a corresponding increase in phosphoric acid and potash. Beets, turnips, radishes, carrots, Irish potatoes, English peas and the asparagus bed all need potash, and the sooner it is applied the better. On cabbage and lettuce, which need very rich soil, it is a good plan to use an additional quantity of fertilizer in the drill when the plants are set. It will be desirable also to supplement this fertilizer with a top dressing of nitrate of soda on most of the vegetables after they are up.

"And how about stable manure?" someone will ask. Stable manure is all right, but to be made effective on early vegetables it must be thoroughly rotted and fined. To put it in this condition it should be composted by piling it up in a large square pile so it will not leach by being heavy rains soak through it, and working it over every week or so for at least a month. Spread about six inches of soil over the top of the pile to prevent the escape of ammonia. Acid phosphate or kainit sprinkled through the pile will also help to hold the ammonia and improve the quality of the manure.

When prepared in this manner there is nothing better for early vegetables, and it entails a great deal of work, but it can be done in advance so as to have the manure in readiness when needed.

The application of fresh manure

from the stable on early vegetables is very liable to prove disappointing, but it can be used to advantage on that portion of the garden you intend to plant in corn, and will do very nicely under squashes. We have obtained the best results from our manure used in this manner or applied broadcast in the fall on some winter-growing crop.

It is a good plan to rotate manure with commercial fertilizer on land which is constantly planted in vegetables. For instance, we shall plant out cabbages this spring on a piece of land that was heavily manured last fall for spinach, and shall fertilize them with one ton per acre of a high grade guano. Our manure we shall apply to the land we had in turnips in the fall, where guano was used, and this land we shall plant in early corn. By this means we keep up the supply of organic or vegetable matter in the soil, which is very important in maintaining it in a good physical condition.

It is not necessary, as some people seem to think, to pile on tons of stable manure on the same land year after year. As good, or even better results may be obtained by using commercial fertilizer alternately with the manure, as I have described, with the additional saving of a large amount of labor. It is often a difficult matter to obtain manure in sufficient quantities in time to prepare it for our earliest vegetables, while guano is always ready. So that we have found it expedient to use guano for most of our early vegetables while applying our manure to corn, and broadcast in the fall, as I mentioned before. We thus get rid of the heavy work of composting, while the land receives an additional benefit from the manure decaying in the soil. The carbonic acid gas generated by this decay acts as a powerful solvent, liberating plant food already in the soil, and much of this gas would be lost in the process of composting.

F. J. MERRIAM.

Fulton Co., Ga.

THE WIDE TIRE.

Experience of an Orange County Farmer. Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

I wish to make a few remarks in regard to the use of wide tires and low wheels. I have been running wide tires for three years, and can say unhesitatingly I would not do without them one year for their cost, and mine are as good now as when bought. I'll state for the benefit of others how I came to purchase wide tires. I borrowed from a neighboring saw mill a log wagon that run wide tire wrought iron wheels, and hauled logs on this one day. That night I told my wife I must have some wide tire wheels. I firmly believe if every good farmer could have just one day's trial, there would be numbers of farmers that would buy when able, though they have not caught on by looking at other people run them. If the Electric Wheel Co. would send them on trial to any reliable farmer, I have no idea that there would be one in fifty returned. Some new steps must be taken before there is much progress in the use of the wide tire, either by the manufacturer or by the Legislature. I well know Prof. Holmes is doing all in his power to get the move on foot.

Again, something should be said of their handiness for loading and unloading heavy material on the farm, such as manure, wood, rock, etc. Have hauled many a load of rock that I would not have hauled had I been without these low wheels.

I have not yet been able to find that the draft is any harder on the farm than with the old high wooden wheel, with all its squeaking and creaking. In some instances, I find the draft in favor of the wide tire, such as on meadow lands and lands that have been broken. My farm is not cut up in ruts as those of many of my neighbors are. In regard to the public travel, if every farmer in any one community would use them, it would reduce the road tax to a minimum.

Yours for better roads,

R. O. CATES.
Orange Co., N. C.

HARRY FARMER'S TALKS.

XV.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

If you want to please the ladies, fence off a small lot in the yard or garden for flowers. Give them some manure and fertilizer so that the flowers will grow. If you wish to pot a few flowers the best soil is sand with very fine manure thoroughly mixed. This will not form a hard crust on the surface like clay. Water flowers in the evening and stir the top soil lightly next morning and your flowers will grow nicely. Unless the weather is very hot and dry, do not water oftener than twice a week.

There is no crop that will pay better in this part of North Carolina than sugar cane—not sorghum. For the best results, plant flat land that is a little moist. Use stable manure at the rate of ten tons or thirty cart loads to the acre. After the cane is up give a dose of 400 or 500 pounds of some good ammoniated fertilizer in a furrow on each side of the row. It is generally cultivated like corn. The yield rarely falls below 300 gallons of sirup per acre. The yield often reaches 600 gallons, and sometimes as high as 800 gallons have been made from one acre. Cane or rattoons for planting will cost from ten to twenty-five dollars per acre. This is the only drawback to the success of this crop. To those who have never used any of this sirup we would say that it is very much like New Orleans molasses. Harry Farmer has seen some very good sugar made from this cane. Besides the crop of molasses, there can be gathered from two to four tons of splendid hay from the leaves or blades which makes good cow feed. The experiment station should test this crop for silage to fatten hives on. We have no silos in this county, or it would be tested here.

"How many eggs do you get a day?" was a question asked some farmers. No. 1 said "About six eggs from seven hens." No. 2 said "About twelve eggs from twenty hens." No. 3 said "About two eggs from forty hens." The first farmer did not state amount of feed given to his hens. The second fed one ear of corn a day. The third fed eight ears of corn. This gives some idea about what farmers do. It will not pay to feed too much corn. As a rule, many of our farmers keep too many hens for the best results. Hens to lay during the winter must have exercise, and when they are forced to scratch for their food they will lay. When you see the backs of hens white with frost, you need not expect any eggs. Have your house tight enough so that the hens will not have any rain or cold winds to chill them at night.

HARRY FARMER.

Columbus Co., N. C.

HOW TO GROW A BIG CORN CROP.

Writing of this important subject in an exchange, Mr. J. B. Hunnicutt, an occasional correspondent of The Progressive Farmer, says:

There is great danger of overplanting cotton this season. The temptation is very strong. Hence we have decided to give some thoughts on growing corn so as to secure heavy yields. Will give similar article on cotton later.

How much corn can we grow upon an acre? Not simply upon one acre, but on each acre in our crop? What ought we to average per acre? We say we should get seventy-five bushels per acre. We should not be at all satisfied with less than fifty bushels. We can grow over one hundred bushels per acre.

We are not gassing. We are not extravagant. We are within our own experience, and the experience of our neighbors and other good farmers in different sections. It has been done. It can be done. It should be done by the average farmer throughout the South.

HOW CAN WE DO IT?

You can do it in this way. Break your land deep in the fall or early winter. How deep? Well, fifteen inches or more. How can we do this? Simply by running often enough in one furrow. If one have

the teams, run a heavy two-horse turner first and a good two-horse subsoil right along behind it. If you have not enough mules for this, then use long, sharp steel scooters and follow one furrow with another. Even the one-horse farmer can do that.

You want a deep soil for corn, because corn roots grow deep, from five to six feet if the hardpan is broken so they can get down in the earth. And because corn needs and must have a great deal of water to make large crops.

Breaking deep gives both of these conditions, root room and water.

MANURING.

But before you do this plowing put on all the stable manure, old scrapings, and compost and every form of vegetable matter you can get. This will then be thoroughly mixed and have time to rot and ferment before spring.

In spring put on cotton seed or the meal or fertilizers of any kind you wish, broadcast, and harrow in thoroughly. These should be near the surface and not subjected to the winter rains.

You ask how much per acre? Well, just as much as your faith, backbone, conscience, and pocket book will allow. The more manure the larger the crop. There is no danger of getting too much. If you give depth of soil and roomy root-bed you need not be afraid of over manuring.

HOW TO PLANT.

Now you can prove your faith by your works. Harrow and harrow again and again until you have several inches of pulverized soil. The finer and deeper the better.

Without any bedding, plant in rows about four feet and drop the corn either by hand or with planter, about 12 to 14 inches. Put not less than 8,000 stalks per acre. Use a little fertilizer in the drill, 100 or 200 pounds per acre.

HOW TO CULTIVATE.

Just before the corn comes up run over with a light smoothing harrow. Repeat the harrowing in eight or ten days. Then keep the middles stirred with scraper or cultivator. If dry weather comes use dust-board. Continue rapid shallow culture until corn begins to tassle. We have tried this plan repeatedly and never failed to get our fifty bushels per acre. Have averaged seventy bushels on land very thin and poor when we began.

Do not be afraid of crowding if you have plowed deep and manured well.

THE COST OF THE CORN.

You will get your corn cheaper the more you get per acre. We have grown corn in this way for 18 cents per bushel, not counting fodder and stalks as worth anything.

But with shredding they are worth a great deal.

It is folly to plow an acre of land all the year and get 10 to 15 bushels of corn. Take fewer acres. Prepare better and make more and cheaper corn.

Dry weather does not hurt corn on this plan but very little. After a few years your soil will be so deep and rich, as to be practically independent of drouths.

You can sow peas last time you cultivate the corn. Then cut your corn and sow oats or wheat and you will get such crops as you have not seen before. This plan not only makes sure corn crops, but rapidly improves the soil.

Plenty of corn, and corn and peas and oats and wheat-hay, make it easy to raise hogs and beef cattle and poultry. It is the foundation of prosperity.

Try it and prove it false if you can or true as you will. Don't go cotton crazy.

A new variety not suited to your soil and climate may be worse for you than an old inferior variety that is adapted to your section.

A poor soil well worked will ordinarily produce better crops than a good soil poorly worked; but for wholly satisfactory results there should be both good land and good work.

CHICKEN-EATING HOGS.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

I see in your paper of Feb. 5th A. J. B. wants information as to hogs eating chickens, etc., and wants to know what will make them fatten. Nothing will make them fatten as long as they eat chickens, is my experience; but if you will, when the hog is eating the chicken, take it from the hog and pour a spoonful of Japanese oil in the chicken and give it to the hog, he will never eat another. I will assure you that the hog will leave the road when he meets a chicken the next time. He will have the chicken half eat up by the time the Japanese oil begins to have its effect. It will treat a hog just like a chicken eating hog ought to be treated. A little blue stone put in the swill will be very good, but be sure to try the Japanese oil first.

Y. C. MORTON.

Richmond Co., N. C.

In feeding value, soja beans are far superior to cow peas. As a green feed for dairy cattle, I consider them the richest green food I have ever used for cattle. I believe, planted in connection with, or separate from, ensilage corn, and put in silo at the same time, in proportion of one ton of soja beans to two tons of corn, that they would in great measure make "a balanced ration" grown on the farm, which, as you know, is the crying need of the hour in dairy circles.—Elliott Warren, Forsyth Co., N. C.

Concord Standard: Mr. J. C. Furr, of Georgeville, was in the city today (Saturday) and made a statement of his experience in hen husbandry. He had fifty hens last year from which he sold 4,100 eggs, for which he received \$40.80. He estimates that the feed cost about five cents per day—\$18.25. With the expenses should be counted some depredations natural for chickens, but on the credit side should be placed all the eggs and chickens the family wanted to consume and a stock enlarged by fifteen hens. Mr. Furr is well pleased with his hens as a means of feathering his nest.

To keep rabbits from injuring young fruit trees, mix pine tar and grease, equal parts, warm and apply it with a cheap paint brush to the lower two feet of the trunks. This coating will also go far toward keeping out borers if applied in spring.

OBJECT LESSONS IN AGRICULTURE.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

Visit successful farmers. Nothing will contribute more toward success in any vocation than enthusiasm which is founded upon faith in your own abilities to succeed in your own undertaking. If anyone anywhere near you is making a success in your adopted line of work, or specialty, you should by all means visit him and see just how he manages, and why he succeeds where others have failed.

Farming in all its branches as now profitably pursued, needs constant study, and during the comparative leisure of winter every one should review the past and plan for better results in future. There is no other method of learning about any farm subject equal to being on the farm where such work is practiced, and having it explained by those who have made it a success. It may be the manner of feeding stock, or a plan of preserving roots, ensilage or other fodder. A farmer may contemplate a system of underdrains for his wet fields, in which case nothing short of a visit to some farmer who has thus drained his lands will enable him to gain so many valuable hints and suggestions regarding this important work. Such visits not only give new ideas but are a wholesome recreation, and many a farmer who at first thought may say, "I can't afford it," will find by experience that he has spoken too soon. Take a day to go and visit some one of the best farms in your county, and the way will open for further visits and a wider knowledge of the best methods of carrying your special line of work to a successful termination.

ISAAC F. TILLINGHAST.
Wyoming Co., Pa.

Horticulture.

STRAWBERRY CULTURE—MARCH WORK.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

There are probably more strawberry plants set in March in the United States than during any other month of the year. Therefore we shall devote this month's article largely to that part of strawberry culture.

Break the land about six inches deep. It can be subsoiled by running either a regular subsoil plow or an ordinary plow minus the wing, in the furrow behind the breaking or turning plow. All of this plowing can well be done the winter or late fall preceding. If so, a disk harrow run over just before planting time leaves the soil in excellent condition. While of great service on cloddy or rough land of any kind the harrow can be dispensed with.

If stable manure is to be used it should be evenly scattered over the land and plowed or harrowed in. While stable manure is not a complete fertilizer for strawberries it is of the highest value when supplemented with other manures rich in the properties in which stable manure is comparatively poor. These properties, potash and phosphoric acid, can later on be applied in the form of kainit or sulphate of potash and acid phosphate.

If enough stable manure is thus applied, say fifty loads or more an acre, no fertilizer need be applied before planting. If none or not enough, cotton seed meal at the rate of 500 to 700 pounds per acre should be used, as the land is poorer or richer. Run off the rows three feet apart as straight and uniform as possible. Sow this in the drill and mix with the soil by running a light cultivator down the row. List on this with a furrow from each side. Knock this list or low bed down nearly even with the field by means of hoes, or a rough wooden implement shaped like a plow can be made to be pulled by a horse. This plow-shaped implement has, instead of a wing or point, a piece of board about a foot long nailed to the wooden share at right angles to the beam. With it these lists or beds can be knocked off as fast as a horse can walk, and left low or high according to the weight thrown on the handles.

On this low bed the plants should be set from twelve to eighteen inches apart, according as the soil is poor or rich, and the variety is a moderate or luxuriant grower. This distance supposes that all runners shall be clipped and the plants grown in stools. If the matted row system (non-system is the usual result of this plan) is to be followed set the plants two feet apart in row.

Some growers have the rows four feet apart and set the plants only one foot apart for matted rows. There is one very serious objection to this. On wide rows like this the plants are almost sure to form such a broad bed that the pickers walking in the middles trample the beds in reaching across to get the berries.

So much for planting. Now as to other March work. There need be no lack of it. It is, or should be generally, a month of action—the very wind gives this hint and by its keen edge spurs us into activity.

March is the month to kill the weeds in the fields, planted the spring before and now soon to come into bearing. Be not deceived by their meek and lowly appearance at this period. A weed apparently as innocent as a lamb, is in fact a crouching lion, biding its time, watching its chance to devour. There is something sentient, may diabolic in the humility with which it hugs the ground till the hoes are hung up, the liberal top dressing of fertilizers applied and the mulch put on over all.

Then it knows that its time has come—that it is master. For if the acreage is large hand weeding is out of the question. Then it casts off innocence and no longer clothe itself in the garment of humility. It soareth upward and spreadeth outward and pusheth downward, and if there were other dimensions than

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