NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE FARMER

FLOWER BOXES FOR WINDOW AND VERANDA

THE SECRET OF THE SUCCESS OF THE CULTURE OF PLANTS IN WINDOW AND VERANDA BOXES, LIES IN KEEPING THE SOIL ALWAYS MOIST.

By EBEN E. REXFORD.

Veranda or porch boxes should be at least a foot wide and a foot deep and the timber of which they are made should be of fairly good quality, for it will have to resist considerable pressure when the box is filled with soil.

These boxes will be found most satisfactory if allowed to project outside the veranda rail. They should be well supported by braces running from the bottom of the box on the outside to the veranda floor.

Paint them some neutral color before filling them with soil.

If ordinary soil is used you will have only an ordinary development of the plants you set out to grow in it, while what you want is vigorous growth.

Procure soil containing as much decayed vegetable matter as you can. No matter how full of roots it is, the nutriment you are in search of is there, and a few roots more or less will not interfere with the plants you propose to grow in it.

On the contrary they will prove of positive benefit as they will help to keep the soil light and porous.

Vines add grace and beauty to the porch.

Before filling the boxes with soil, bore a few holes in the bottom of them to allow for the escape of surplus water. In all probability there will be no surplus water to escape but it is well to be on the safe side.

When you put the soil into the boxes press it down firmly. If dumped in lightly, evaporation will be rapid and the roots of your plants may suffer in consequence.

At the outside of the box set vines of quick development, like German Ivy, Tradescontia, Moneywort, or the Madeira vines.

These will soon hide the box completely and after a little they will form a screen for all that portion of the veranda below the rail.

Morning-glories can be planted here and there along the box and trained up on strings and made to furnish shade for the veranda as well as a screen.

Other flowering plants can be selected to suit individual taste. Almost any plant can be used with reasonable chance of success if care is taken to see that the soil in the box is kept always moist.

This is the secret of the success of the culture of plants in window and veranda boxes. Do not be satisfied with a quantity of water that will wet the surface of the soil and leaves that portion of it two or three inches below almost as dry as before any was applied.

Use it by the pailful and make sure that all the soil in the box is moist. Here is where most persons fail in box gardening. They use a pint where a pailful is needed. They overlook the fact that because of their elevated position these boxes part rapidly with moisture by evaporation.

Being exposed to hot air and wind on every side they are likely to become dry in a very short time and the only way to prevent this is to make it a rule to apply water in liberal quantities every day.

Do this and you will have no trouble in growing good plants in them. Neglect to do this and you will meet with the failure you deserve.

While the ordinary window box affords a great deal of pleasure by the flowers it furnishes at the window-sill, it furnishes no shade for the window.

Most delightful awnings can be made with very little trouble by nailing strips of lath together in a square and fastening them to the top of the window, letting them slant downward in front, on the angle of the ordinary cloth awning.

Support them by braces running from the window frame to their outside edge. Cover them with coarse wire netting.

Plant quick growing vines at the ends of the window box, and train these up by strings until they can take hold of the netting that covers the framework of the awning.

In a short time you will have all the shade you need and your window will be as attractive to the eye, from outside, as it is pleasant to the occupant of the room.

The good old nasturtium makes an excellent veranda-box plant, because it will droop if allowed to, and will, at the same time, cover the surface of the box with its pleasing foliage and richly colored flower.

The Petunia is another most excellent plant for this purpose, because of its combination habit of upright and drooping growth and its profuse flowering. Candy-tuft, Lobelia, and Sweet Alyssum are all free-flowering plants, of decided drooping habit, and can be made very effective as an edging to these boxes.

If one does not care to make use of upward growing vines as a screen, tall plants with luxuriant foliage, like the Canna can be used instead with very satisfactory results.

There are more than 10,000,000 acres of forest lands in North Carolina. These forests and the industries depending upon them produce material valued at more than $35,000,000 a year and afford employment for 30,000 men.

"Nine persons out of a possible ten are dissatisfied either with what they have or with what they haven't."

HOLD ON TO THE GOOD BREEDERS.

By J. W. Ingham.

Sows should be retained for a number of years until their places can be filled with their equals.

It is well known that the progeny from mature parents are superior to those descended from young progenitors not fully developed. Boars and sows for breeding should be kept in a good thrifty condition but not fat.

The writer has always been troubled to keep his breeding sows from becoming too fat and consequently farrowing a small number of scrawny pigs.

I once took a large sow to fatten for one-half the pork. I did not know she was with pig and fed her all the corn meal and wheat middlings she would eat.

Imagine my astonishment and vexation when she had three little dwarfed pigs—not only smaller than pigs usually are when first farrowed, but emaciated.

Sows for breeding should not be allowed to run with the fattening hogs fed on corn but kept in a pasture by themselves and given a plentiful supply of slop made of equal parts of wheat shorts, corn meal and wheat bran.

Most young sows will breed when three months old if allowed to run with a boar but eight or twelve months is as young as is judicious to breed them.

The pigs from large-bodied, old sows will be more in number and frequently double the size of pigs from young sows when farrowed, and this with the same feed and care and will frequently weigh 50 per cent more at a year old.

Not only this, but it stunts or dwarfs the growth of such young things permanently and they never attain good size.

A neighbor of mine bought an old sow for $10. She had 10 fine pigs the following spring which were fattened and sold to a butcher in the fall of the same year, bringing him $115 and he still has the sow for a breeder.

APPLES

Sprayed and Unsprayed

For the purpose of showing the farmer and fruit grower how he might save that part of the apple crop which is usually sacrificed to insects and fungi, most excellent experiments were made during one entire season, by the Kansas College of Agriculture, the college men going into the field and personally carrying on the work of spraying. The results of the spraying were uniformly good, and the owners of the sprayed orchards were well pleased.

The following splendid results of this work are valuable to farmers and fruit growers in every other state in the union as well as Kansas, for they demonstrate beyond a doubt the helpfulness of spraying.

Commercial results from seven widely separated orchards, including both commercial and home types and composed of the varieties of apples recognized as standard in Kansas, carefully sprayed showed an average gain of four bushels in actual yield of merchantable fruit per tree, or 87 per cent compared with untreated parts of the same orchards.

Not only was the actual and relative amount of merchantable fruit materially increased, but the average percentage of number 1's and number 2's, which are the high-priced grades, was also increased by 15 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively.

The average net profit from spraying was shown to be $1.62 per tree, or $97.20 per acre when the fruit was sold as "orchard run," and to be almost doubled when properly graded and marketed.

All seriously injurious insects and fungous diseases have been markedly reduced and most of them have been made almost negligible.

Prepared lime-sulphur plus arsenate of lead has produced the best results on apples subject to Bordeaux injury and nearly free from apple blotch, while Bordeaux mixture plus arsenate of lead gave best results on varieties attacked by apple blotch.

SUMMER CARE OF THE PIGS.

Many farmers think that they cannot afford to feed the pigs liberally during the summer season. The pigs are allowed to shift for themselves in many instances and of course do not make much growth but one may see a pretty good profit in feeding at the present high prices of both feed and pork.

The hogs will just about live on the pasture they can gather from the field and what grain is given them goes to growth and any one who has tried it has found that only a moderate ration fed to the shoats on pasture will make a good growth throughout the season.

Early spring pigs of any good breed can be made to average a pound of gain a day by the time they are eight or ten months old and a large part of this can be made on pasture.

The pig that is fed enough food to keep it growing rapidly from the start to finish is usually the most profitable porker.

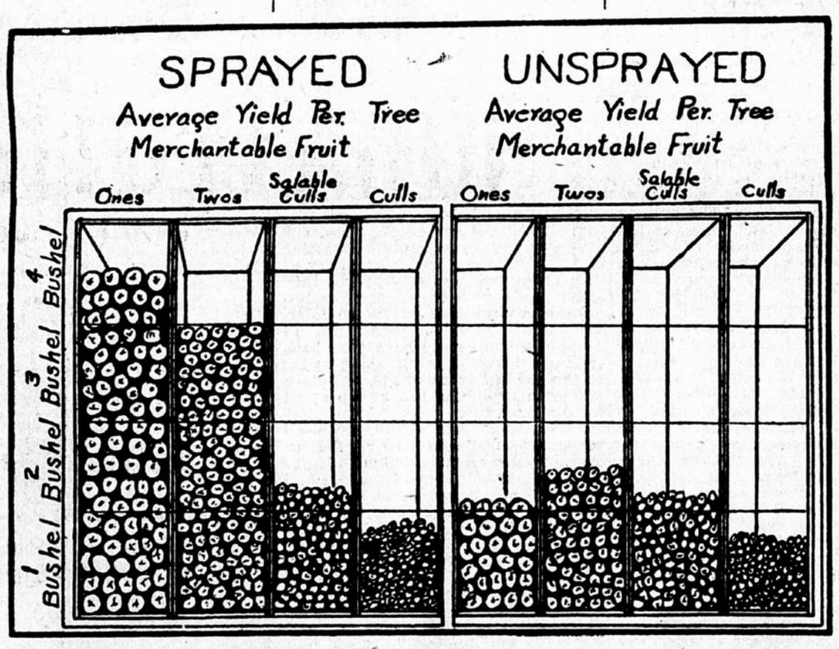
In some sections where there is sufficient waste crop to fatten the hogs it may be profitable to allow the shoats to shift for themselves.

However, usually the hogs that are allowed to shift for themselves and get fat on the waste are easy victims of cholera and swine plague. There is a section in the western part of my country in West Virginia where the hogs are allowed the free range of the forests and that locality is visited by cholera every year or two.

There are quite as many hogs that die from cholera there as ever reach the pork barrel. Hog raising as a business must be treated in a business way and if it is conducted without cost there is little profit.

If there is a fair profit in feeding hogs the business should be conducted in as careful and business-like way as the feeding of cattle and sheep.—A. J. Legg.

Not a day too early to be making plans for sending at least one of the boys to an agricultural school next fall. Perhaps if he has a few acres for his own use he may be able to pay part of his expenses. At any rate he is entitled to an education and a fair start in life.



CORRECT MARKETING OF POULTRY PRODUCTS

IF THE MOST SATISFACTORY PRICES ARE TO BE OBTAINED THE QUESTION OF MARKETING MUST RECEIVE DUE CONSIDERATION.

By F. H. STONEBURN.

Poultry products of various kinds form one of the greatest crops produced upon American farms. The ever increasing number of farms and plants devoted exclusively to poultry keeping produce large amounts of high grade goods, although these are inconsiderable when compared with the vast supply coming from the small flocks scattered upon the farms and in the villages throughout the country. Unquestionably the great bulk of poultry products has come in the past from the latter sources, and this condition is likely to continue.

Most farmers concede that their flocks of poultry yield them a fair profit, although any intelligent observer has but to spend a short time in investigating the great markets to learn that poor methods of preparing and marketing alone prevent the producer from receiving much greater returns. The majority of poultry raisers fail to realize that their profits could be largely increased, first, by the production of better and more uniform goods; and second, by improved methods of disposing of them.

Not infrequently it is stated that high-grade goods sell themselves, and in a sense this is true, but it is not enough to turn out superior goods; much is lost if they are not marketed in the most careful manner. The poultryman who receives the highest quotations for his products throughout the year is the one who studies "how, when, and where" to market. He learns that during certain months in each year there is a shortage of different kinds of poultry products, and he plans to produce as large a quantity as possible of these products during the season of scant supply. He then ascertains in which markets he can dispose of these goods to best advantage, and prepares and packs them according to the requirements of those markets.

Poultry products are concentrated and valuable, although not extremely perishable. Therefore, improved means of transportation make it possible for the poultryman to place his goods in the best markets without greatly increased expense.

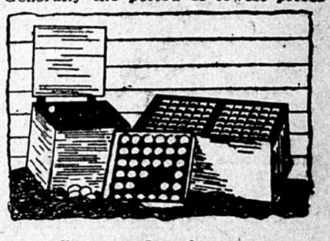
The best trade in the great cities pays the very highest prices for all kinds of poultry products, but this trade is difficult to secure and can be held only by those able to ship stated quantities of their special products regularly during the year, or at least throughout the season when such products are in demand. It is, therefore, usually a waste of time for those who can ship only at uncertain intervals to attempt to handle this trade.

According to his opportunities the poultryman may choose from several methods of disposing of his products, selling direct to the consumer, selling direct to the retailer, or shipping to commission merchants for sale upon the open market.

Selling direct to the consumer is regarded as the most profitable method of disposing of high-grade goods. As a rule substantial increase may be secured over the prices paid by stores and markets.

Hotels, restaurants, clubs, and hospitals are excellent customers, and very frequently they contract for their supplies in this way. As a rule such institutions are willing to pay good prices, and their trade is desirable because heavy supplies are needed and it is easier to ship the entire output of a farm to one large customer than to divide it among several who use small quantities.

No special poultry product can be marketed throughout the year to such good advantage as eggs. When gathered from the nest they are a "finished product" ready for packing and shipment without the intermediate processes of dressing and cooling which so greatly trouble the seller of dressed poultry. The farmer or poultryman who makes a specialty of producing market eggs can estimate within a very few cents the price they will bring him throughout the year, an advantage possessed by no other farm product. With almost the regularity of a pendulum egg prices swing backward and forward according to season, as a careful study of market reports covering several years clearly demonstrates. Generally the period of lowest prices



Different styles of egg cases.

begins the latter part of March or in early April and continues well into May. This is the natural breeding season of the fowls and therefore the period of greatest production. The period of low prices varies somewhat from year to year, an early spring hastening the drop in price, and a late one retarding it. As the fowls become broody the production begins to drop off, and large numbers of eggs are incubated, thus further reducing the supply available for consumption. Prices then take an upward turn, rising gradually from May to September, when a large proportion of the adult fowls go into molt and practically cease egg production. From this point the rise is rapid, reaching the highest point in December and January and dropping rapidly during February and March as the spring flood of eggs begins to reach the market.

During the period of heaviest production vast numbers of eggs are placed in cold storage for preservation until the season of scant supply. This system really acts as a balance-wheel, as it absorbs all surplus at a fair price. There is no doubt that, without this or some similar method of preservation, egg prices would go to a ruinously low figure every spring, as at that time production is greatly in excess of consumption.

The world has for us just what we have for it. It is a great whispering gallery which flings back the echo of our voices. If we laugh, it laughs back; if we curse it curses back.

CONSERVING SOIL MOISTURE.

The damages directly attributable to drouth represent an enormous annual loss to farmers. If we would devote more attention to the work of conserving soil moisture during the spring and early summer, the summer drouths would be far less destructive to our growing crops.

There are few seasons when there is not sufficient moisture to mature good crops if proper methods are employed in handling our soils so that the moisture will not be lost through evaporation, during the primary growth of the crops.

The growth of crops should not be retarded at a time when it is within our power to provide them with moisture.

The average farmer begins every spring with an average supply of moisture in his soils to supply the crops through a rainless season, but on most of our farms the lack of drainage and indifference to the conservation of moisture reduces the yield of crops.

After the soil moisture has been allowed to evaporate we are powerless to provide a new supply for the crops that have been robbed. Summer drouths can be avoided in no other way than by improving the water-holding capacity of the soils and shaping the methods of tillage and cultivation so that we may prevent the loss of the moisture with which they are saturated at the beginning of the season.

On many soils under-drainage is necessary and will produce wonderful changes in the character of the soil. It improves its action toward heat, light, penetration or roots, and the implements used in preparation and cultivation and stimulates bacterial action, which we are just beginning to appreciate as an important factor in soil fertility.

HINTS ON GARDEN WORK.

Some gardeners pack cauliflower by drawing a few of the outer leaves over the head and tying the ends at the tops.

If rank weeds are to be plowed under it is much better to hoe them first and allow them to wilt in the sun for a day or two.

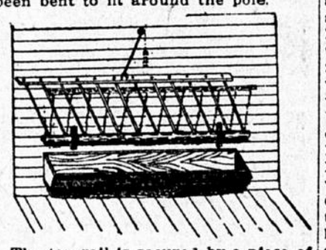
FEED-RACK FOR SHEEP.

The rack is made with a pole for the bottom rail and a piece of 2x6 inch scantling for the top-rail. The crossbars are pieces riven from an old piece of timber.

These crossbars are four feet long and about one and one-half inches in diameter, shaved smooth with a drawing-knife.

The holes in the top and bottom rails are made with an inch-auger. The crossbars are trimmed to fit the holes and then wedged to hold them in place.

The bottom rail is held in place against the side of the barn by two strips of heavy sheet-iron which has been bent to fit around the pole.



The top rail is secured by a piece of half-inch rope which passes over a pulley located in a hole in the wall above the rack, a weight being attached to the outside end of rope, serving to always keep the rack against the wall.

When the hay is put in, the rack is drawn down, and when filled is pushed back against the wall, holding the hay in place closely and kept in place by the weight.

The grain-trough placed beneath and in front of the rack serves as a receptacle for the chaff and leaves of the hay—the best and most nourishing part of the feed which would otherwise be pulled under foot and lost as food.—J. W. G.

The stamens are the male plant and never produce seed. When both kinds of plants are planted in the same bed the pollen of one flower fertilizes the other, thus causing cross fertilization. The wind, bees and other insects are also invaluable as fertilizers.

DESTROYING THE CATTLE TICK IN OVER-FLOWED REGIONS

The recent floods in the Mississippi Valley have given the planters an exceptional opportunity to deal a decisive blow against the tick which transmits splenetic or Texas fever of cattle. When the waters began to rise the cattle, wherever possible, were taken to the higher lands, such as mounds and the levees. In many cases all of the cattle found in areas of many square miles were concentrated on the levees. Consequently, for many weeks the areas over which the cattle have roamed have been reduced to but a very small fraction of the area over which they would feed naturally. While the cattle have been greatly concentrated in this manner the ticks have been destroyed in the pastures. It is true that the cattle tick is somewhat resistant to water, but the long duration of the flood and the force of the current in the present instance have undoubtedly practically, if not completely, exterminated the tick in all except high localities in many counties in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Of course, the cattle that were concentrated on the levees or mounds carried many ticks to those places with them. These ticks have developed on the cattle and their progeny have reinfested the cattle. When these cattle are returned to the pastures (which are now free from ticks), they will carry many ticks with them and in this manner the pastures will quickly become reinfested. If proper steps are taken by owners of the cattle this reinfestation can be prevented to a very great extent. The Bureau of Animal Industry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture has been actively co-operating with the authorities of the States concerned in an effort to protect the overflowed areas from reinfestation, and if stock owners take advantage of the present opportunity, tick eradication in the localities in question may be assured at very slight expense. The first thing to be done is to destroy the ticks on the cattle before they return to the pastures. This can be done by greasing the cattle with crude oil or by the use of the well-known arsenical dip. This step alone will prevent the reinfestation of the pastures. Another step should be taken to insure the continued freedom of the pastures from ticks. If the cattle now returned to the pastures are allowed to visit the places where they have been concentrated on the levees or mounds they will naturally become infested with the progeny of ticks hatched from eggs deposited by individuals that were attached when the cattle were taken to the higher places. It is therefore necessary for some time to prevent the cattle from grazing on the areas where they have been concentrated. Experiments indicate that seed ticks on the areas where the cattle have been will die of starvation within 120 days after the cattle have been removed. Consequently, such areas should be kept under fence or the cattle otherwise prevented from visiting them for four months after the cattle leave. At the end of this period the levees will be entirely free of ticks and the cattle may be allowed to return to them without danger.

It is understood that there may be practical difficulties in applying this advice in some localities but wherever it can be followed it will enable the planters to reduce the infestation by ticks on their places to a very small amount. The trouble and expense necessary is inconsiderable. On account of the great gain to be derived by taking advantage of the very exceptional conditions that have prevailed, it is urged that planters make a special effort to combat the tick in the manner described. As has been explained, the two steps to be taken are, first, the destruction of the ticks on the cattle when they leave the levees, and second, the prevention of reinfestation of the cattle and the starvation of the ticks by fencing the areas where they have been concentrated.

WHY CUCUMBERS DO NOT BEAR.

A Pennsylvania farmer writes asking why his cucumber vines did not bear last year. He says they all blossomed nicely but bore no fruit. This is probably because his vines were not fertilized. Like strawberries and other small plants, on some plants all the flowers bear stamens and others all bear pistels only.

Skimmed milk finds its best market in the pig pen.

A RESTFUL INVENTION.

A back has been invented which can be riveted to almost any kind of metal seat. The manufacturer says that an implement seat without a back will soon be regarded as uncomfortable as a backless chair. Sitting all day long humped up over a cultivator, or any other kind of machine is a back-breaking job and this bracing implement will doubtless be hailed with joy by farmers who desire to conserve their strength.

The farmer who invites his city friends to go out and shoot quail on the place would better present them with a couple of dozen shot on the farm of some other man who prefers insects to the birds.—John Greenlough.

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the late foliage plants all around the vegetable garden produces a fine effect.

Reading good farm papers will interest people in better farm conditions.

MOVING LARGE TREES.

The moving of large trees is now made possible through a single contrivance which may be attached to the running gear of an ordinary wagon. The tree can be raised to any desired angle and retained there, by means of the endless chains on the cog-wheels in the upper part of the frame-work and their connections with the block and tackle below. The old-fashioned guy ropes, usually fastened to the head of the tree, are discarded, as they have frequently proved to be injurious by disconnecting or loosening the roots from the ball of earth.

In order to get the wagon directly over the ball of the tree, and also over the hole where the tree is to be replanted, the rear axle of the wagon is removed, and the back of the truss or elevated framework upon which the tree is suspended keeps this part of the wagon together at any width required. To prevent damage to grass areas, wide tires are used. In the case illustrated, 14-inch tires were used on the rear wheels.

It is the "know how" that counts on the farm as well as in other callings. Did you ever hear of the plumber who sent in a bill for fixing a pump and which read as follows: "Fixin', 50 cents; knowin', $5?" This is just about the proportion of "knowin' how" to actual work that exists in successful farming.

Investigations and experiments show that it does not make much difference whether a horse is watered before or after feeding, provided he is not allowed to drink his fill on an empty stomach while warm.

ECCENTRIC FARM WORK, BUT IT PAID.

On a neighboring farm lived an English gentleman who certainly had some novel methods of working.

His farm consisted of some clay lands. In the center of this farm was a very rich, black field that had formerly been a swamp.

The soil was mainly made up of decayed vegetation, and when drained was as loose as an ash heap.

In this field he annually grew potatoes and watermelon. When the Colorado potato bug came around he headed them off in this way:

He planted the potatoes in drills and leveled the land smooth. When the potatoes began to come up he ran along the rows a cultivator and covered all the young shoots under.

In a week or so when they made a second appearance he did the same thing, using a larger shovel on the cultivator. This was done the third time using a single shovel plow which left the rows properly hilled up.

The bugs never got a chance at the potatoes—got disgusted and looked for other fields to work on.

The covering of the shoots seemed to help, for when they were left to the light and air they grew tremendously thrifty. His potato crop was always the wonder of the community.

He raised watermelons and lots of them, but not for the usual purpose they are grown.

He pressed the juice from the melons, boiled it down in copper evaporators to a fair syrup, and with this syrup he used apples for thickening, to make apple butter, and it was of a quality hard to beat.

He supplied large quantities of it to the near-by markets and at good prices. The syrup was of finest quality and much of it was used.—J. H. H., Indiana.

IN THE SHEEPFOLD.

One good quality in the Dorsets is their pugnacious disposition which makes them able to use their big horns in a defense against dogs.

Some owners of land in the far west claim they can raise 14 sheep to the acre on alfalfa and beet pulp.

A pure bred ram of the coarse wool breed crossed with Merino ewes produces a good lamb for early fattening.