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BY GEORGE HOWARD,

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AGRICULTURAL.

From the Fayetteville Observer.

Sampson County, July 20, 1833.

Gama Grass.—Mr. Hale: When we were together, a short time since, I promised to send you some account and description of the Gama Grass, with the result of such experiment as I had made with it.

The first notice I saw of this Grass, was by Doctor Hardeman, of Missouri; whose account of its wonderful production, and valuable properties, may be found in the 8th vol. of the American Farmer, page 244. I considered the calculations he made of results, visionary, and had forgotten it.

It, however, attracted the attention of Mr. James Magoffin, of Alabama, who procured some seed, and has now been cultivating it several years. The result of his experiment may be seen in the 13th vol. of the American Farmer, pages 50, 143 and 215. Also, in the 4th vol. of the Southern Agriculturist, pages 312 and 475.

Further experiments with this grass are detailed by Mr. William Ellison, in the 4th vol. of the Southern Agriculturist, page 404 and the 5th vol. of the same work, page 5. To these several communications, I would refer such of your readers as have those works, for a better and more particular description of the grass, than I can give them. [N. B. Such farmers as can afford to pay the cost of the American Farmer and Southern Agriculturist, and neglect to subscribe for them, or one of them, do not deserve the benefit of any improvement or discovery in Agriculture.]

The combined results of the experiments of these gentlemen show, that the quantity of hay which this grass yields, is far greater than any heretofore tried. That the quality of the hay is equal to any other; and that, both when green, and when cured, it is greedily eaten by stock of all kinds. Mr. Magoffin informs us, he has actually made at the rate of ninety tons of green hay per acre in one year—equal to between 20 and 30 tons of cured hay. Dr. Hardeman states, that a single root, covering a circle, the diameter of which was too feet, yielding at one cutting 52 lbs. of green hay, which when dried weighed 30 lbs; and consequently, that an acre of ground filled with roots equally productive, would yield more than 270 tons of hay. However exorbitant these accounts may appear at first, the high standing of these gentlemen leaves no room to doubt their accuracy. My own experiment induce me to believe, that under circumstances, *in all regards* favorable, they may be realised.

Of the immense value of this grass, to us, in a hot climate, and on a sandy soil, no doubt can exist.

I have ascertained the following facts, with certainty. That it grows spontaneously and luxuriantly, in our country or alluvial bottom, and rotten lime stone lands. I have planted it in a poor sandy loam on a clay foundation, (such as in the general quality of the stiff pine lands of our country,) and on a sand hill originally as barren, and as arid, as the deserts of Arabia. These soils, *well manured*, produce it abundantly. Even the long drought of 1832, (which, with me, continued from 23d May to 1st August, with the exception of one slight rain on the 9th of July,) did not materially affect its growth. It may be cut as early as the 1st of May, and the cutting repeated every thirty days, until frost. It ought to be planted in drills three feet apart, and two feet space between the root. An acre will then contain 7,350 roots. A single root, of the second year's growth, (on the dry sand hill,) at three cuttings, has this year already yielded 7½ lbs of green hay, and will without doubt yield at least as much more before frost. At that rate an acre of pure sand hill, well manured, would yield 55 tons of green hay, equal to about 18 tons of cured hay, of a quantity as good as the best blade fodder.

In January last, I drilled some seed, in drills two feet apart, with seed dropped at intervals of six inches, intended for transporting next fall. The whole ground is now covered with a mass of grass 2 1-2 feet high. On the 10th of this month I cut and weighed the product of one drill 35 feet long. It yielded 25 lbs. of green hay which when cured, produced 8 lbs of delightful forage. At this rate, an acre would yield 15,750 lbs. of green hay at one cutting. It may yet be cut three times more, and consequently, the product would be 63,000 lbs. of green hay, from seed planted in January last. The product of old roots is from two to three fold. These seeds are planted on pine land, with a poor sandy loam on the surface, with a clay foundation—well manured. I have not made any experiment with this grass, on any other soils than those above specified, but I know it grows much more luxuriantly on alluvial bottom, and rotten lime stone lands.

Mr. Magoffin is certainly mistaken when he supposed this grass is found indigenous only in the western prairies. He furnished me with a few seeds of his own raising. I also procured some from Mr. Ellison of South Carolina, which grew in Fairfield District, and some from Gen. Owen, which grew spontaneously on his plantation in Bladen county in this State, on the alluvial soil of the Cape Fear.

They are all planted near each other; and are, unquestionably, the same species of grass. There is not the least difference between that found in this State, and that from South Carolina. That sent me by Mr. Magoffin, from Alabama, is a little different in colour being of a paler hue, and of a little finer texture.

This grass is, without doubt, the 'Tripsacum' of botanists. In Elliot's Botany of South Carolina and Georgia, vol. 2d, page 522—two varieties are described:

'1st Dactyloides—Root, perennial—Stem 4 to 5 feet long. Leaves large, 3 feet long, 1 1-2 inches wide. Flowers, in terminal spikes—Spikes numerous; very rare—have only seen it growing on the margin of the Ogeechee river. Flowers from May to July.'

'2d. Monostachyon—Root, perennial—stem 3 to 5 feet long. Leaves 1 to 3 feet long. 1 inch wide.—Spike, solitary—Flowers, in terminal spikes. Grows—Flowers, in terminal spikes. Grows abundantly on the Sea Islands, (particularly on Paris Island) and along the margin of the salt water—Flowers from August to October.'

For any practical purpose, there is no difference between these two varieties. They are found growing together.

The following characteristics will render this Grass obvious to common observers:

It grows in tufts or bunches, measuring about two feet across and three in height, which tufts are composed of numerous branches, springing from a common root, which is tuberous in its form for about three inches, and terminates in many small, but strong radicles. These branches, in their origin, form the common root, and have a peculiar arrangement; being produced from two opposite sides of the tuberous portion only, and departing from it as an angle in opposite directions, gives to this part of the plant a flat shape.

The leaves which (previous to the period of flowering) all issue from the root, are of a deep green colour, from 2 to 3 feet long and from 1 to 1½ inch wide, are shaped like a blade of fodder, but are sawed or rough on the edges, particularly towards the point. The leaves commence in a sheath, at the bottom, which incloses and covers the original of several other interior leaves. About the last of May, a number of flower stems shoot up from different parts of the bunch, and grow from 3 to 7 feet high, and terminate in one, two, or more finger like appendages (called by botanists spikes.) The upper end of the spike, resembles a single spike of the tassel of indian corn, and has a blossom (farina) on it. The seeds, (which vary from 3 to 6 on each spike) are imbedded immediately below this tassel, and when flowering, each has a single tag, of a deep purple color, resembling the silk of Indian corn. The tassel drops as soon as it has shed its pollen, and then the seeds ripen, one by one, and drop off. The seeds are imbedded on opposite sides of the stem, and attached together, after the manner of the rattles of a rattle snake.

The flowers stem is jointed and clothed with leaves much shorter than those which proceed from the root, the sheaths of which embrace the stem, to within a short space of the next joint. It is channelled on alternate sides like a stalk of corn. When full grown, it puts out branches at nearly every joint, which terminate and produce seeds like the main stem.

I have been thus particular in my description, to enable persons to search out this grass. I am satisfied it will be the source of much wealth and comfort in our *pine* country particularly. It is certainly the spontaneous product of our own State. I know it grows in New Hanover, Brunswick and Bladen Counties, and have been informed it is found in Craven and in Orange and may, probably, on any of our alluvial bottoms.

Now is the time to search for it. It is in bloom and more readily identified, by the peculiarity of the seed. When not in bloom, it very much resembles some other grasses which are different in their nature, and not so valuable. I might add much more regarding it, but again refer your readers to the essays above referred to.

Very respectfully, yours.
WM. B. MEARES.

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*A well known writer in the Newbern Spectater of the 19th inst. (H. B. C.) states that during the last year he found the Gama grass on the shore of the Neuse river, and that a gentleman in Florida assured him that he had found it in that Territory.—[*Editor of the Observer.*

Famine in the far West.—The St. Louis Republican, of the 16th ult. says, "We learn by the steamboat Assineboine, B. Pratte, Jun. master, arrived on Thursday night last, from the mouth of the Yellow Stone, that FAMINE a calamity more dreadful than the cholera, threatens the inhabitants of the immense region of the Upper Missouri. No buffalo had appeared upon the plains of that country during the past spring; and the Indians, in the thriftless economy which governs them at all times, were, in consequence, destitute of the means of subsistence. Even the traders were compelled to subsist on buffalo tongues (obtained during a preceding season) and corn; and the voyageurs had not this fare allowed to them. No one has, we believe, pretended to account for the disappearance of the immense herds of buffalo which covered those regions. It was observed by persons who were in the Assineboine, and who have been in the habit of navigating the Missouri, that points at which vast numbers of buffaloes had always been known to herd, were deserted or but a single one, now and then seen."

☞A machine has been invented in Cincinnati for cutting wheat, or any other small grain, by horse power. It is stated that it will, when propelled by two horses, cut as fast as eight persons can bind. A fair trial has been made of it, in the presence of several members of the agricultural society of Hamilton county. It met their fullest approbation, and the editor of the Cincinnati Advertiser, who has seen the machine, expresses the opinion that it may be applied to cutting grass also.

☞The last Cincinnati Gazette states that in every part of the great Mississippi Valley, the crops are most abundant, and are generally saved. In Missouri and Illinois the wheat is said to be remarkably fine.

☞At no former harvest in Ohio, have we had better crops, or more favorable weather for securing them. The crops of Corn and Oats also promise abundant crops.—*Ohio paper.*

☞The late tremendous rains "down east," have had the distressing effect, as a writer pathetically informs us, of preventing the growth of radishes! Not a single radish, says he, shall we have. If the crops of cucumbers should also be cut off, it would ruin half the doctors in that part of the country.

Preserved Eggs.—We published some time since, a paragraph stating that eggs are kept for three months in France, in lime water. In consequence of this, a lady of East Woods, L. I. has sent us a present of a basket of eggs of geese, turtles and ducks, which have been preserved for a year in lime water. As far as we can discover, they are as good to the taste and the sight as they ever were. A two gallon pot was filled with eggs and about a pint of slacked lime prepared for white washing, was put in, and the vessel filled with water and a board laid over. The water was never changed and appears clear and sweet. The same lady has for several years kept eggs a few months in this manner.—*L. I. Star.*

Tomatoes Tarts.—As Tomatoes are now in season, we will be excused for calling the attention of Housekeepers to the virtues of this valuable vegetable. Besides their uses (as shown in Nos. 2 and 3 of this paper,) for Ketchup, Pickle, Preserves, Soups, Gravies, &c., it is not generally known that they answer a valuable purpose for Pies and Tarts. We have eaten of them ourselves and think them little inferior to peaches, prepared in a similar way.—Take ripe Tomatoes, peal and cut them in slices, then stew them with sugar, spice, &c., afterwards lay them in a crust and bake.

With half a chance, Tomatoes may be raised in a great abundance in any garden—they take up but little room, and require but little attention and are in season from early in summer till late in the fall. They are capable of being used in a greater variety of ways than any other vegetable or fruit we are acquainted with; and are excellent in every one.

Southern Planter.

☞No man can get riches of himself, but by means of others.