

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

THE INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE PARAMOUNT TO ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF STATE POLICY.

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Agriculture.

RAISING, PACKING AND SHIPPING WATERMELONS.

A timely article by Prof. Irby, formerly agriculturist of the North Carolina Experiment Station.

It is the privilege of all of our farmers to have an abundance of watermelons of good quality. Many try to raise melons with no work or trouble.

The best melons can be raised on the sandy lands, and by fertilizing well, they can be grown to perfection even on the very thin lands.

Lay off the rows ten feet each way and dig out at the intersections about 15 to 18 inches. Fill this with well rotted manure, pine straw or woods mould. Put a good handful of commercial fertilizer on this manure. Pull the soil on this fertilizer and manure, making a good broad hill, not too high, but about six inches in height and two feet across. Thus it will be seen that the surface is about six inches from the manure and when the seeds are put in two to three inches deep, that they will be about three inches above the fertilizer. The seeds will sprout and grow vigorously at first from what they have in the seeds, and by the time the roots need extra food they have reached down to the fertilizer. This preparation should be made at least a week before the seeds are planted, and the seeds should be planted just before the last frost is expected. I say before the last frost in order that they may come up just after the frost.

In Central North Carolina the last frost comes on an average about the 15th of April. A good plan is to begin planting for market the first of April and plant on the South side of the hill, putting in about four seeds. A week later plant again on north side regardless of the condition of the first planting, and then one week later plant again. In this way you take advantage of the oldest and best plants. Suppose the seeds planted April 1st should germinate April 7th and you should plant again on that date. If there comes no more frost, then you are all right and have only to destroy the extra plants; but if a frost should come April 10th then the first planting will be destroyed, but the second planting has been in the ground three days and are of course three days ahead of what would be planted on that day. This plan should be followed when the melons are grown for market as a few days sooner or later will determine whether the crop will pay a handsome profit or will be grown at a loss.

The plants can be protected with a shingle, piece of bark, pine straw, or a plank. Some plant early in tin cans, and in large turnips scooped out and the turnips set out in the ground when frost is no longer expected. The early melons are the ones that bring the fancy prices.

If grown for family use, a few days later makes no difference.

If grown for shipping, they should be of a tough, thick-rind variety, such as the Kolb Gem, Jones or the Triumph. Pull about two days earlier than you would for home use, as they will ripen some on the road.

Be careful not to bruise in the packing, and carefully pack in the crates. It is easier to show any one how to pack a car than it is to tell them. It is like curing tobacco; you have to learn it by actual experience. However, I will make a few suggestions.

Put pine straw, or wheat straw into the car about 12 inches deep. Commence at the ends and pack to the center of the car. First put down a layer of short melons at the end, being careful that there is no play between the last melon and the wall. Now match these as nearly as possible with another row of longer melons. Next put a row on top of these two rows, being careful to put the ends against the wall and the second layer and top on the second layer of long melons. Keep up this plan until the doors are reached with the melons. The melons should have no play whatever, but should be packed against each other and the wall. When both ends are packed to the

doors then nail plank across the doors three feet high. Pack in this square space as compactly as possible and as near on the plan of the rest as possible and the work is finished.

Sell on the side track if possible, as there is no telling what the car of melons will bring after they leave you; for often you are called on to help pay the freight. Be sure you know the man you ship to, as there is more rascality perpetrated by commission merchants of fruits and vegetables than any other. Sell on the side track for \$75 rather than risk getting \$100 per car by shipping yourself.

For local markets you can be governed by circumstances and sell wholesale or retail them from the wagon. Remember an early crop, or a very late crop, is the one that pays best.

BENJAMIN IRBY.

BEAUFORT COUNTY FARM NOTES.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

Farmers in these parts, the central and eastern portions of Beaufort County, are right much behind with their work on account of unfavorable weather. Hence the hitherto early crops will be later than usual this season. The acreage in Irish potatoes, however, will be fully as large, if not larger than it was last year.

The signs of the times indicate that our planters this year will diversify their crops even more than usual. Preparations are being made to cultivate some of nearly everything adapted to our soil and climate. Tobacco is one of the exceptions; I hear of no one here who aims to cultivate the weed.

Several years ago there were many of our people driven to the wall by depending entirely on their cotton crops for all their supplies. Since then there has been a change for the better. There is now no farmer, large or small, known to the writer, in the county, who does not make it a point to raise most of his supplies at home. Everybody now, more or less, diversifies his crops with corn, cow peas, oats, grass, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, cotton, etc. Cotton has not been king with us for some time.

The most fertile and productive land in our county is a large area of swamp containing several thousands of acres known as South Creek Pocosin. Quite a large acreage of this land has been held for many years by wealthy owners for speculative purposes, the terms of sale being such as to render the farmer unable to buy. Two tracts of the lands thus held have been sold to other speculators within the last two years. These have recently been divided up into plats of suitable size for farms and are now being sold to farmers on long time, but at high figures. Some twenty-five or thirty of these plats have already been sold to the working men, and though the price of the unsold portion is rapidly advancing, nearly doubling in less than a year, there are still buyers to be found. Of course, the speculators will realize by far the greater profit out of the transaction, and some of the buyers (farmers) will probably "go under" in the end, for it is certain that the situations places them largely on the tender mercies of the parties of the first part—the speculators. This condition, however, is better and more hopeful for the future than it would have been for all this productiveness and richness to be entirely lost to the county. Every stroke of well directed labor on this land means increased production and the general enhancement of property in this section.

Our public roads are perhaps better than the roads in some parts of the State, but they are not so good as they ought to be, and might be greatly improved at a comparatively small cost.

CLOD HOPPER.

Beaufort Co., N. C.

Duplin Journal: Onions are the leading article of perishable stuff now being shipped to the Northern markets. There has been quite a demand for them this season, and from the hundreds of packages that have been transported to the cities of late, we must believe they are highly perfumed by now.

HARRY FARMER'S TALKS.

LXVII.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

The boys will want to go fishing occasionally now a days. Let them go; it will do them good. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Some times it is a good idea to assign a task to be done at or by a certain time, and when it is done, let the boys have any extra time they may have gained. We liked fishing when a boy and need to do our best in order to get through a certain job in time to go fishing. We have spent all day along the banks of a creek, wading through the mud and water, doing without dinner and going home late in the afternoon with about two cents' worth of fish, and far more weary than if we had plowed all day; at other times we would have more success and catch enough for a good "mess."

A day off from home will do any farmer good. It will help him by taking his mind off of his work and he can take hold next day with greater courage. Many farmers stick too closely to work. It will help them to see what others are doing, and make life more pleasant. How often have we enjoyed a picnic, a fish fry or a church meeting, where we could meet our old friends and neighbors! Some times men waste too much of their time this way, but such cases are exceptions.

The Sunny South colony at Chadbourne, this county, have adopted the stock law by a good majority. They claim that it is necessary to keep stock confined, and think it too costly to fence their stock in and have to fence their neighbors' out. We are glad to know this, as our people can see how it works before it becomes the law of the whole State, which will only be a few years at least.

We are glad Mr. Franklin Sherman is working to get the farmers to spray their fruit trees. We shall try it ourselves and see what effect it will have. The high price of apples and other fruits which can be grown in North Carolina should stimulate fruit growing. When young we often went to our grandfather to get apples (not having any at home on account of young trees) and have often wondered why people do not raise them now like they did thirty years ago. My grandfather did not take much trouble with his trees, yet he had them by the hundreds of bushels. Brandy and cider were as plentiful as one could wish. You could find them then on every farm of any size but it is different now. Apples sell here for as much in the summer now as they did in the winter twenty years ago. We do not know the cause of the decline in this part of the State, but will give our opinion another time.

HARRY FARMER.

Columbus Co., N. C.

CARTERET COUNTY FARM NOTES.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

Farm work is somewhat delayed on account of the wet weather, very little plowing done the last week.

These will be about as much fertilizer sold this year as last for tobacco and more for potatoes, but not over one-fourth as much for cotton.

Our farmers have sown a considerable amount of oats this spring because of the shortage of crops last year.

Cattle and hogs seem to be in fair condition, considering the cold winter we have had. We hope for a good crop year. Farmers here didn't make over a half crop of tobacco last year and not over a fourth of a crop of cotton; corn, potatoes and peas nuts were not one half crops.

D. McCAN.

Carteret Co., N. C.

Many farmers are gradually learning that their condition may be improved by keeping less but better live stock. There is still a tendency to keep a larger number of stock on our farms than can be well and profitably cared for. One animal well cared for is more profitable than three or four half kept.—A. J. Smith, Clearfield County, Pa.

NEWS OF THE FARMING WORLD.

Our Washington Correspondent Tells What Progress is Being Made in the Various Sections of the Country.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

Mr. G. Wm. Hill, the editor of the Department of Agriculture, is now engaged in the preparation of the Yearbook for 1901 and despite his efforts to make it a volume easily handled, it seems as if this one will be even larger than that prepared last year.

"In making up the new Yearbook," said Mr. Hill, "I am not losing sight of the well known fact that the people generally do not care to read long exhaustive articles, and so I am cautioning the various heads of divisions to confine themselves to discussions which will not use more than eight or ten pages. Despite this, however, many come, unless properly edited, which would occupy double that space."

EVILS OF FREE DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTS.

"I am still heartily in favor of making the farmer pay for the documents he wants. What he does not care for, he will not receive, and thus be compelled to throw them away, as is often done now with the free distribution in vogue. What I mean by paying for them is that they should pay the mere cost of printing and paper used in the excess number published. The composition, of course, we must pay for, as the pamphlet must be printed anyway; the excess number should be paid for."

"The present method of free distribution will kill itself, if one would consider the facts. Last year we distributed over 7,000,000 documents—nearer 8,000,000; this year the total will mount up to nearly 11,000,000. The 7,000,000 copies did not go to over possibly 300,000 farmers who get on an average of ten pamphlets a year. The latest census figures show that there are 7,100,000 farmers in this country. We should reach at least three-fourths of them and allow them to read 10 or 12 copies annually. To do this would require the publication of from forty-five to sixty million documents annually. When we consider that last year over \$750,000 was expended for the printing and distribution of these publications, a proper distribution to an equitable proportion of our farmers would cost in the neighborhood of \$6,000,000 per annum."

"The Yearbook of last year was received with favor all over the country and the demand upon us for copies was unequal to our supply as Congress allowed us to have 35,000 of the 500,000 printed. The balance the members distributed themselves. The annual appropriation for this book does not come out of the agricultural funds, but is provided for especially by Congress. This amounts to \$300,000 for printing and binding. An official of the Postoffice Department informed me that this book alone cost the government in the neighborhood of \$125,000 for postage or transportation."

"Mr. Wilson, our Secretary, is opposed to a measure placing a price upon the agricultural publications, believing it to be too stringent, but there is no doubt but if Congress were asked to appropriate \$6,000,000 for publications of the Department of Agriculture, there would at once be a howl of dismay come from that body over the enormity of such an expenditure."

FERTILIZER EXPERIMENTS.

An experiment in Russia with green manuring was made in order to compare the availability to higher plants of the nitrogen of green manure with that of nitrate of soda, various kinds of animal manures and other nitrogenous fertilizers. In small plots of sandy soil oats were sown, the nitrogen being applied from nitrate of soda; liquid manure; fresh horse manure; rotted horse manure; fresh cow manure; blood meal, and green manure.

The largest crop secured was from the plot on which green manure was applied, the other fertilizers being effective in this order—nitrate of soda, blood meal and liquid manure. The horse manure did not increase the yield, the cow manure diminished

it and the decrease was very marked where fresh horse manure was used. This experiment, which probably is of value, is not of course to be taken as accurately indicative of the results of similar field applications.

THE GREAT VIRGINIA ROAD CONGRESS.

For more than a hundred years, the pathway leading from Charlottesville, Virginia, to Monticello, the home and tomb of Thomas Jefferson, in the beginning a bridle path has, by the tread of countless feet, become worn to the size of a narrow road. This road is in some places very dangerous, having a rise of 16 feet in the 100 in many instances.

The enterprising people of Charlottesville have formed a Memorial Road Association with Gen. Fitzhugh Lee as President. It is their desire that the Department of Agriculture shall undertake the construction of an object-lesson road over the route leading to the tomb and former residence of our great "Expansion" President.

In laying the plans for this new road—a distance of two and one-half miles—it has become necessary to re-locate almost the entire length of the old road over a new course, resulting in an easy grade with a maximum of only 4 feet in the hundred.

"When this road is completed," said Mr. M. O. Eldridge, the Assistant Director of the Office of Public Road Inquiries, "it will not only serve to benefit the people in the locality where it is built, but as well visitors from distant places who make pilgrimages to the tomb of the immortal Jefferson."

"In our work we have been aided by the National Good Roads Association as well as by the Southern Railway Company, which will bring the good roads train to Charlottesville."

"The object-lesson of this road should be of great value to all who see it, especially when it is considered that the variations in the different sections of the road are such that it will be a good example of mountain road construction."

"On April 2nd, 3rd and 4th, the Jefferson Memorial and Inter-State Good Roads Convention will meet at Charlottesville to view the road, see the progress of the work, and discuss road questions generally. On this occasion General Fitzhugh Lee, Governor Montague, of Virginia, and Secretary of Agriculture Wilson will speak. In addition, the President and his Cabinet are expected to attend the exercises if possible."

GUY E. MITCHELL.

Washington, D. C.

GOING INTO THE BRICK BUSINESS—A WORD OF WARNING.

After so much wet weather we will feel as if we are almost obliged to plow. We will get impatient. We will think the time to plant has come and that we cannot wait. The temptation to plow will be very strong. But we must remember that to plow when the soil is wet means to go in to the manufacture of sun-dried brick bats. The sunshine and wind will harden these thousands of small clods which we have made into something like a sun-dried brickbat. They will then be worth no more to the crop than brickbats. The plant food in them will be insoluble.

We cannot afford to make this mistake. Better wait and plant later.

Dust and not mud is what we need in the farm to make crops with. Plowing land wet is the quickest way to destroy fertility. This is the chief cause of the poverty of Southern soils. The damage will last for several years.—Southern Cultivator.

Whiteville Press: Messrs. O. F. Brown and M. H. Sweet, two commission men of Providence, R. I., have recently acquired lands adjoining Whiteville, which they intend to devote to the production of strawberries for their own market. The demand for berries has exceeded the supply in their market and they have been reduced to the necessity of growing for themselves. Fifteen acres will be put in berries at once and the acreage increased to 200 in the future.

STATE CHEMIST KILGORE'S REASONS FOR WARNING FARMERS AGAINST THE "SECRET PROCESS" FERTILIZER SCHEME.

As promised in last week's PROGRESSIVE FARMER, we give herewith the State Chemist's convincing summary of reasons for warning farmers against the agents of the Lipps' fertilizer process scheme. After publishing in full the Lipps process as obtained from the Patent Office, Dr. Kilgore comments as follows:

1. There is nothing new or ingenious in the materials employed, manure, dirt, acid phosphate, muriate of potash, nitrate of soda, sulphate of ammonia, lime and salt, being familiar and well-known substances. Except lime and salt, these materials are, and have been, in frequent, if not constant, use for years by farmers and fertilizer manufacturers. Salt is not plant food and the lime as used works far greater injury in driving off the ammonia from the manure than it does in pulverizing the manure. The main value of the manure resting in its ammonia, it is mistaken economy to throw a part, at least, of it away, merely for the sake of getting the less valuable residue in condition to be put through a grain-drill.
2. Great stress is laid on the arrangement of the materials, it being claimed that this is such as to bring about complete disintegration of the manure with the release and retention of the valuable plant food in the compost heap. Not only is this not so, but the arrangement is very undesirable, in that the lime is placed where it will do the greatest injury in driving off the ammonia (let any farmer who has a son in any of our schools, taking even elementary chemistry, put this question to him), and likely also injuriously effecting the acid phosphate by making it less soluble and valuable as plant food. The nitrate of soda is also in danger of being lost, not because of being put in the worst place, but because anywhere in the entire mixture is bad for it. The chief object in composting is to protect and render better fit for plant food the nitrogen (or ammonia) compounds. The Lipps process helps to defeat this aim, and if the compost does not go wrong, it is certainly not its fault, as the temptation is great.
3. But the proportions of these materials are said to be such as to make a specially "well-balanced" fertilizer. For the good of the mixture it is to be hoped that there is something in this contention. Let us examine The constituents which give to a fertilizer its value are ammonia, phosphoric acid and potash. In what amounts and proportions do these enter into the Lipps Compost? Using his formula we have:

	Total in fertilizer materials	Phos. Acid	Ammonia
		Pounds.	Pounds.
Acid phosphate, 14 per cent.	100 pounds	14	
Muriate of potash	50 "		25
Nitrate of soda	25 "		4.75
Ammonium sulphate	5 "		1.25
Lime	100 "		
Total	305 "	14	31.75
Average manure*	1,695 "	5.9	6.8
Total, one ton	2,000 "	19.9	38.55
Percentage composition		99	1.90

*When makes a better showing than if one-third dirt were employed.

There were, therefore, put into the mixture, phosphoric acid .99 per cent.; potash, 1.59 per cent.; and ammonia, .81 per cent., or one and one-half times as much potash as phosphoric acid, and twice as much as ammonia. What farmer would,

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.]