



## What Farmers Want to Know

By W. F. MASSEY

### Cold Storage for Sweet Potatoes

ARE sweet potatoes ever kept in cold storage like Irish potatoes? Never, for putting sweet potatoes into ordinary cold storage would very quickly destroy them. After drying off at a high temperature the sweet potato must be kept as near 50 degrees as practicable, while Irish potatoes will keep best at about 35 degrees.

### Early Garden Peas

WHEN is the proper time to plant English peas for canning? I am very much interested in "What Farmers Want to Know" in The Progressive Farmer.

Had you signed your name I would have sent a reply by mail. The time for planting English peas is in January or February. Planted late they will not amount to much, as the hot weather soon burns them up. Mine are now ready to bloom, and will be blooming before this is printed.

### Brome Grass

FROM North Carolina: "Please tell me the value of brome grass as a forage crop."

I suppose that you refer to the awless brome grass about which much has been said of late years. It has been found valuable in the semi-arid sections of the West, but all experiments I have seen and read of in the South show that it has little value here. I believe that where it succeeds it is used mainly for pasture.

### Analyzing Limestone

I AM sending you a sample of limestone and would like you to tell me if it has any value."

No one can tell anything about such a specimen by looking at it. I have no laboratory and am not an analytical chemist, and hence can tell you nothing about such a specimen. To learn what it is send a specimen to your State Experiment Station. They have their laboratory and chemists, and it is their business to inform farmers of the state on such matters. There is an experiment station in every state, and such matters should be referred to them, and they are always ready to help the farmers of the state in every way they can.

### Grazing Crimson Clover

I HAVE a good stand of crimson clover and have thought of grazing it, but am told that it will bloat cattle. Is this true?"

I do not know any kind of clover that will not bloat cattle if they are suddenly turned on it when hungry and the clover is wet with dew. I do not think that crimson clover is any worse than other clovers. To avoid danger, turn the stock on after they have been well fed and the clover is dry, and let them remain at first but a short time, and thus gradually get them used to it. Never turn on when the cattle are ravenously hungry.

### Market for Catnip

FROM Virginia: "Will you advise me where I can find a market for catnip and hoarhound? When do you make cuttings of privet for a hedge and how shall I root them? How do you top-dress corn with nitrate of soda? Will sugar beets improve sour land?"

I do not know that there is any market demand for catnip. You can learn better from Wallace Brothers, Statesville, N. C., who deal in herbs. I make cuttings 10 inches long of the privet in early spring and set them nearly full length in the soil in the

line where the hedge is wanted, setting six inches apart. You can do this now. I do not top-dress corn with nitrate of soda, but if I did I would simply scatter it along the rows after the corn has attained two or three feet in height. About 100 pounds an acre will help corn on poor land. No, sugar beets will not improve sour land nor any other kind of land, for the beets need good land and heavy fertilizing. You might put a ton of pure sugar on acid soil and it would not sweeten it. The only thing to sweeten acid soil is lime.

### Sudan Grass

FROM North Carolina: "What is Sudan grass? Is it a pest grass like Bermuda and Johnson grass? Will it sprout from the roots the next year or must it be resown? Can it be grown profitably in North Carolina on poor gray land?"

I know of Sudan grass only from what has been published about it, for I have never grown it, though will

But if you want the dry powder use the same proportions of air-slaked lime and pulverized bluestone and add 1 part of Paris green to 50 parts of the powder well mixed. I think you will find it more expensive and troublesome than to use the four-row sprayer.

### Mixing Fertilizer

I HAVE plenty of acid phosphate on hand. How will it do to mix this equally with cottonseed meal as a fertilizer for corn?"

It will make a very good fertilizer, giving a moderate percentage of nitrogen, a small percentage of potash, and a large percentage of phosphoric acid. It will answer very well for corn or cotton.

### Trouble With Sweet Potatoes

FROM Tennessee: "Last fall I housed 500 bushels of sweet potatoes, yams and the Southern Queen. Yams have kept well, but the Southern Queens get bad on the inside, while looking perfectly sound outside, and when cooked a very little around the outside is good and all the inside hard and bad. Can you give me the probable cause?"

It would be purely guesswork for me to try to give you the cause. It

as a source of nitrogen and phosphoric acid and I use it annually. But the statement of the nitrogen being equal to 10 per cent ammonia does not mean that there is any ammonia in it, for there is merely organic nitrogen in it. Salt will add nothing of value to the mixture of cottonseed meal and acid phosphate, for salt will not take the place of potash. A mixture of equal parts of cottonseed meal and acid phosphate will give you some potash and a large percentage of phosphoric acid.

### Mung Bean

I AM enclosing seed which I am told are those of the Mung bean. The man who gave them to me says that it is a very valuable forage plant, as the leaves do not shed in curing for hay like the cowpeas do. Being a legume, I suppose it would help the soil. Any information will be appreciated."

I know of no bean called Mung bean, and the seed sent look like seed of okra, which is not a legume but a near relative to cotton. I will plant the seed and find what they are, but am pretty sure they are okra. This is a good garden vegetable, as the young pods make a good dish and are useful in soup. I grow some every year.

### Damping Off

WHAT is the cause of tomato plants damping off or scalding? I have about 1,500 plants and have lost probably half of them. The plants are in boxes in a cold frame under the double-glazed sashes. One morning it turned warm and as they were dry I watered them, and I think they were scalded by the sun."

The damping off of young seedlings is caused by a microscopic fungus. As soon as any are noticed to fall the best thing is to prepare boxes of fresh soil and take out all the good plants and transplant them to the fresh soil. Then do not keep the frame too close. My tomato plants are sturdy ones with the stems of a purplish color. They are set four inches apart in the frame, having been started in the greenhouse, and in the frames I expose them to the air as soon as the outside temperature is above 40 degrees, for I do not want to set out plants with a tender green stem, but always expose them to the air till the stems get the hardy, purplish color. These plants are now (April 15) plenty large enough to set out, but the weather is still too uncertain. They will probably go out late in the month. Then if frost threatens I have some heavy cardboard protectors which fold in a conical form which I can set over them and bank around with soil. The plants will be regularly sprayed with Bordeaux mixture to prevent leaf blight and to some extent some of the rots.

### Navy Beans Hardly Suited to the South

FROM Tennessee: "I want to grow six or eight acres of Navy beans for market and would like to have some information as to their cultivation. What variety will be best, the best time to plant, preparation of the soil, and time for harvesting? What kind of land suits them best?"

As I have told several other inquirers, you cannot grow Navy beans in your climate commercially at a profit. You can easily grow them just as you would snap beans, and a light loam is best for them. The Pea beans will be the best to try, but you had better try a few first and after growing them I think you will not want to plant six or eight acres, for you will have a far larger percentage of damaged beans and far more hand sorting, and will have what are left full of weevils. You cannot compete with the bean growers of the North. But you can grow Black Eye peas better than they can, and they will sell for as good a price as the Navy beans.

## TWELVE THINGS TO DO IN MAY

1. Plan now to market your crops cooperatively. Car lot cooperative shipments mean profits; disorganized selling means losses.
2. Screen the house to keep out flies and mosquitoes, and at the same time keep these pests from breeding, if possible.
3. Start a green sod on the front yard, in place of having a hard-baked, clean-swept waste.
4. Keep the cultivators and harrows busy. Crops carried into June clean and well worked usually give little trouble thereafter.
5. This is the last month for getting your boy into the Corn and Pig Clubs and your girl into the Canning Club. Get busy.
6. See that the binders, mowers, rakes and other implements used in harvesting the oat and wheat crops are in perfect shape for the big rush.
7. Save all the clover and vetch seed possible.
8. If you haven't enough pea and bean seed to go in your corn and on your oat land, better get them before it is too late.
9. If you haven't a good Bermuda pasture May is a good month to start one.
10. Keep the garden at work by planting egg plants, peppers, pumpkin, squash, tomatoes and corn.
11. Put peas, beans, peanuts, corn, sorghum on every possible acre in order to avoid feed bills next year.
12. Don't forget a liberal second planting of watermelons.

probably do so this year. It belongs to the sorghum family and is an annual, and must be sown every spring. I do not know any crop that can be profitably grown on poor land except cowpeas to turn under to improve it for the growing of other crops. To make good crops of any sort of grass you need to have the soil in good heart, and grass of an annual nature like the Sudan will make the land poorer instead of better. Good farming and soil improvement are necessary for the profitable production of any crop.

### Bordeaux Mixture for Irish Potatoes

I HAVE 109 acres of Irish potatoes to spray and want to make a mixture of lime, bluestone and Paris green, and want to use it with a dry powder machine. If you know a better mixture I would like to have it."

To make a regular Bordeaux mixture of the 5-5-50 grade, slake five pounds of fresh lime in a cask and then add water enough to make it 25 gallons. In another cask hang five pounds of bluestone in a flour sack in hot water to more quickly dissolve it. Then add water enough to make this 25 gallons. Pour the two together into a third cask, stirring well all the time. This is for preventing the early blight.

To destroy the beetles, add to the 50 gallons a pound and a half of lead arsenate. Strain into the sprayer, and it is far better to use a four-row sprayer than the powder machine.

seems to be a new sort of disease, and the best thing to do will be to send specimens of the potatoes to the Tennessee Experiment Station at Knoxville. They have the men and the microscopes for the study of these things, and they are there for the purpose of helping the farmers. As a rule farmers do not get in connection with their station as they should.

### Rabbits Eating Plants

LAST year I had trouble from rabbits eating my sweet potato plants. Can you suggest any way to protect them?"

I have seen it stated that a teaspoonful of asafetida well mixed in a half peck of clay will repel rabbits if sprinkled around, and if mixed into a paste with water and painted on the trunks of young trees it will prevent their biting the bark. It is also stated that a mixture of equal parts of air-slaked lime, sulphur and soot will repel them.

### Salt in a Fertilizer

I CAN get fish scrap analyzing available phosphoric acid, 4 per cent; and nitrogen, 8.33 per cent, equal to ammonia, 10 per cent. What is your opinion of this for corn or cotton? In mixing acid phosphate and cottonseed meal in the absence of potash is it practicable to use some salt in it as a side dressing for cotton?

The fish scrap is a very good article