



What Farmers Want to Know

By W. F. MASSEY

Why Not Read the Paper?

I AM daily getting letters asking about the cultivation of the late crop of Irish potatoes, how to destroy nut grass and how to grow horse radish. I have recently told on this page all I know about these things, and the subscribers do not seem to read the paper.

Blister Bugs

"PLEASE tell how to destroy the bugs on potatoes,—not the Colorado beetle but the old blister bugs, which do not seem to mind Paris green."

Cut a good cedar brush and whip them out. I have driven them out in swarms and they will keep going and not come back.

Let Cantaloupe Vines Alone

"I HAVE one-fourth acre in cantaloupes now setting fruit and still blooming profusely. Will it tend to make the melons ripen earlier to pinch the tips of the vines?"

Better not interfere with the growth of the vines. I have never seen any good results from pruning the vines of cantaloupes or watermelons.

Himalaya Berry

"I AM much interested in the Himalaya berry, and intend to plant an acre of them. Where can the plants be had, and when should I plant?"

Better go slow about planting this blackberry for commercial purposes. One of the largest growers of small fruit plants in the United States says, after repeated trials, that the Himalaya berry is worthless. I hear of some who find it good, but I do not know of any one growing them for market.

Tomato Leaf Blight

"THE lower leaves of my tomatoes are turning yellow and the trouble is extending up the stalks. How can I stop it?"

The trouble doubtless is the fungus known as *Cladosporium fulvum*, or leaf blight. Had you sprayed the tomatoes earlier you could have prevented it. Spraying now will check its spread. Always spray tomatoes every ten days from the time they are set till the fruit is nearly grown. This will prevent the blight and most of the fruit rots.

Bugs and Young Melons

"WHAT will keep the bugs off of young melons?"

The little striped or spotted beetles that attack the plants just as they come through the ground can be prevented from damaging the plants by keeping them covered with dust of any sort. I use very fine bone meal, and that repels the bugs and helps the plants. Spraying with lead arsenate, 1 pound to 30 gallons of water and 2 gallons of molasses will kill them, and this is also good to spray the plants after the fruit sets to destroy the worms that get into cantaloupes.

Rabbit Foot Clover

A NUMBER of our subscribers have sent me samples of the little gray-head clover, for name. It is *Trifolium arvense*, known also as Rabbit Foot clover. It is a native plant, growing freely in sandy soils, and being a legume has some value perhaps, but is generally regarded as a weed. It is an annual, starting in the fall and ripening in summer like crimson clover, and where it grows the soil will be found inoculated for crimson clover. Some ask where to

buy the seed, but I do not think they are in commerce at all. It grows very thickly where I live on every waste spot, but is regarded only as a weed. No one here sows any of it.

Propagating Dewberries

"I WISH some information in regard to the propagation of dewberries by rooting the tips."

Pinch the young canes when about two feet long and they will branch. Then in late July or early August cover these tips with soil and each one will make a plant. But you can make better plants from cuttings of the roots. Cuttings two and a half inches long are made of the roots in the fall and buried in boxes of sand in winter, and planted in spring in rows and cultivated, and by fall they make fine plants and better ones than the tips. Red raspberries are grown in same way.

Tomatoes Rotting

"WHAT is the cause of tomatoes rotting? They seem to be all right till about time for them to ripen, and then they begin to rot in the centre."

There are several fungous rots that attack tomatoes which can be prevented by regular and repeated spraying with Bordeaux mixture, but the blossom end rot is thought to be caused by dry weather, and spraying does not seem to prevent it. I have had it every year when the weather is dry, but have not noticed any this summer, for we have been having constant rains, and now if it does get dry I have an irrigating pipe over my garden and am independent of the rain. I have not seen a rotten tomato yet, and picked my first ripe one June 12.

Dahlias and Roses

"WE HAVE pruned our dahlias to one stalk, but the wet weather is making them grow very fast, and I fear they will bloom too early. How should they be treated? We used the tobacco decoction you advised on our roses and they are doing fine, but some of the finest ones are showing signs of mildew. What shall we do for this?"

I am now cutting back all the dahlias that show flower buds, cutting the first joint below the shoot showing the buds. This will cause branching, and the later flowers will be more abundant and better than the sunburnt blooms that come in mid-summer. To prevent mildew on roses the Bordeaux mixture is effective, but it makes the bushes unsightly, and it is better to use formaldehyde, 1 pint to 30 gallons of water. I use this before any mildew appears, and thus prevent it. Where there is already mildew the spraying should be repeated till the fresh leaves come out.

Making a Silo

"PLEASE give me your opinion on the advisability of building a silo underground where there is no danger of water rising in it. I would dig 15 feet and 8 feet in diameter and cement the walls. Will this be as well as building it of lumber above ground?"

Certainly it would not. It would cost a great deal more to dig the pit and cement the walls, and then it would not keep silage as well as a silo above ground, and it would be far more difficult and costly to hoist the feed out than to throw it down from the silo outside. I once used three large underground silos with cement walls, and found that the constant condensation of the moisture on the wall damaged a great deal of

the silage along the sides. A cheap and good silo is the kind used largely by the dairymen in north Ohio. These are made with wooden hoops made of two or three layers of half-inch stuff three inches wide and yellow pine flooring is nailed to the inside of these hoops, and as wood does not

shrink endwise, the silo remains tighter than with iron hoops. A silo of this kind well covered with thick cement wash on the outside and oiled with boiled oil every season inside, will last a long time. But I would never make a silo smaller than 10 feet in diameter and 20 feet high.

\$500 More a Year for the Average Southern Farmer

WE MUST NEVER CONCLUDE THAT WE KNOW IT ALL
By PROF. W. F. MASSEY

THE farmer who comes to the conclusion that he knows all there is to be learned about farming stands a much poorer chance of improving his income than the man who realizes that there is a great deal for all of us yet to learn, and who is all his life a student.

If any one knew all about the soil and its cultivation and the best method for making profitable crops, there would be no further use for the experiment station, no further use for any investigations into the nature of the crops we grow and the best treatment to give them. We are learning more about these things every year. We know a great deal now which was not known before the stations were set to work making their researches.

And the work of the stations has made it possible for the teaching of agriculture and the sciences connected therewith, and preparing men for further investigations for the increase of our knowledge. The man who thinks he knows it all will soon see his neighbors making more than he does if they are earnest students.

The man who knows it all never attends the farmers' institutes, never gets the station bulletins, has no use for the county demonstrator, studies the phases of the moon more than the condition of his soil, and sticks in the old ruts, and wonders why there is no money in farming.

The Know-it-all Is Doomed to Failure

THE man who is a student and is ambitious to increase the fertility of his soil and make bigger crops, and wishes to find the most economical methods of doing this and increasing his profits, will get information from every source attainable. He will have his address entered for the bulletins of his experiment station. He will get the monthly list from the Agricultural Department at Washington, and will watch for every bulletin the Department issues for farmers that may be of help to him. He will attend the institutes and make notes of all that interests him, and will be always ready to consult with his county demonstrator and to test the methods proposed on his own land. At the same time he will be a student of his own soil, and will endeavor in every way to learn more of its peculiarities, for he will understand that no hard and fast rules can be made that will apply to every man's farm.

He will study the life of the plants he uses to produce his crops, will learn how plants grow and take food from soil and air, how they make seed, and how he can improve their capacity for production by the best known methods of selection, for he will understand that there is as much to be gained by increasing the capacity of his plants as by the improvement of his soil. Soil improvement and plant development go hand in hand with the student farmer.

We must understand that success in any profession depends on the knowledge a man gains of his profession. No can get to be a successful and useful physician who fails to study every advance that is made in medical study and the needs of the human body in sickness and health.

No can become a successful lawyer who fails to study the books written on law, or fails to keep up with the decisions of the courts, or fails to study the best methods to present a case to court or jury. Men

in all other professions study everything that is published by other men in their profession, and never dream that they knew it all.

But many farmers imagine that there is nothing in the published experience of other farmers that will be of value to them, and they have an ignorant disdain for what they call "book farming," imagining that any facts that have been learned about the cultivation of the soil and the improvement of crops become worthless when put in print. They claim to be practical farmers, when in fact they are far less practical than the men who would help them in the books and bulletins. The station investigators measure and weigh accurately everything, while the farmer who imagines that he knows it all, guesses at everything. He guesses at the acres, guesses at the yields, guesses at the best time of the moon to plant or harvest, guesses at the best methods for improving the soil or making improvement in plants. In fact, he is totally impractical and a guesser rather than a student.

The Farmer Who Guessed Instead of Knew

SOME years ago I attended an institute in a great dairy section of Pennsylvania. There were some excellent lectures made by men skilled in dairy work, and demonstrations given in various ways. After the morning session a man came to me and said, "I came over here just to hear what you men had to say. I can beat all my neighbors, for I sell more milk than any of them." I told him I was glad to hear of his success, and asked him if he knew how much milk he got for a dollar's worth of feed, whether he knew that every cow in his herd was a profitable cow or a mere boarder. He replied, "I never look into those things; I grow all my roughage and some grain, and buy some grain feed and get the milk." I asked him how long a merchant would continue in business who never knew what his stock cost nor whether he was selling at a profit or not and who never took an account of stock. I told him that he knew that his market in Philadelphia required a certain standard of cream in the milk, and asked did he know that every cow in his herd made milk up to standard.

He began to think and said, "I believe you are right, and I had better study these things," and went off, determined to keep a record of his cows and the cost of feed and get a tester to find out the value of the milk of each cow. In fact, I believe that man started then to study his business, realizing that he had been very slack in this matter.

But it is not every man who comes to an institute to scoff who really gains by coming, for some men are so set in their habits that no amount of lecturing will induce them to change and study their profession.

But I am glad to be able to say that the day of prejudice is passing in the South. Farmers all over the South are realizing the importance of study in agriculture, and are anxious that their sons shall have a better opportunity than they had, and hence they are crowding the colleges of agriculture with their boys, who will go forth as leaders in the great agricultural advancement that is sweeping over the South, and will point the way towards greater profits on every farm.