

How Weed Seeds Are Scattered

Article No. 209 "Farm Facts Every Boy Should Know"

By Falt Butler

Business Talks

J. A. MARTIN

HIS LETTER—MY ANSWER

THERE is an old saying that example is better than precept and in advising the readers of this paper to advertise we are not telling them to do something that we ourselves don't do.

Up in New York City there is a great little paper called *Printers' Ink*—considered the best of its kind published and eagerly read by the advertising fraternity.

Not long ago I wrote a double page spread for *Printers' Ink* telling about The Progressive Farmer's standing in the South and why advertisers should use it.

Soon after its appearance, Mr. H. E. Sands, advertising manager of Henry Sonneborn & Co., in Baltimore, wrote me the following letter:

"Out home I was reading your 'double page spread' in the current issue of *Printers' Ink*. I made a memorandum to write you today because I want to congratulate you on this splendid advertisement and to say that it was not necessary for you to sign it personally. Anybody who knows you could see the Martinique all over the advertisement just about the way perspiration decorates our Baltimoreans when it is 100 per cent humidity and 99 in the shade.

"I just got your letter of the 9th. Wish you would keep rolling this idea of statistics in your mind. You are a natural born salesman and I know that if you were promoting the sale of Styleplus Clothes you would do it with a big augur."

To his letter I made the following answer and it tickled my big boss (Mr. Poe) so much he has instructed me to run it in my "Business Talks":

"While I greatly appreciate the compliment bestowed upon me in your letter of August 11th, it is so remindful of a story they used to tell on a fellow in my old home town that I have gotta tell it to you. Not to do so would be for me to be guilty of rank conceit.

"This is the story: 'Jim Turner was a "landed man," but he was as ugly as home-made sin. His neck was red, his eyes were green, his arms and hands were bony and hairy, his figure was long and gaunt, and he was anything but attractive to the fairer sex. Though Jim had money, and tried to marry every girl in the county, they all turned him down.

"In the same county there lived an old maid, Miss Sue Freeman, who had long since given up all hope of being married. While folks loved Miss Sue and knew she was good, everybody had to admit that she was ugly.

"There came a time, then, when Jim was at his rope's end and asked Miss Sue to marry him. Miss Sue felt the same way about it and took him.

"For quite a while after they were married Jim made ardent love. He would slip his arm around her waist and holding her close would say, 'Sue, you are the sweetest, the prettiest, the best looking girl that ever blessed a man.'

"Under this gentle care old Miss Sue began to pick up considerably. Her eyes got brighter, the roses came back to her cheeks and she really did improve a lot! Folks all around noticed it and commented on it.

"But there came a time when things didn't break right for Jim: Cholera got his hogs, rain caught his hay, drouth ruined his corn, his pastures failed and the boll weevil ate his cotton.

"During all these troubles, Jim unintentionally forgot to pet Miss Sue and the little old lady began to wilt. Mechanically (and maybe man-like) Jim noticed this and called a doctor. The doctor came and finding nothing really wrong with Miss Sue told Jim that there wasn't anything the matter except that he (Jim) wasn't petting her like he used to.

"Thoroughly ashamed of himself, Jim resolved to do better and that night when he put away his mules he started to the house to make amends. He found Miss Sue standing on the front porch under the morning glory vines looking mighty lonesome and pale and tired. Inspired, Jim skipped up the steps, held her in his arms and told her that old sweet story once again:

'Sue, you are the sweetest, the prettiest and the best looking girl that ever blessed a man.'

"Reaching down for her apron and bringing it to her eyes Miss Sue buried her face on his manly chest and sobbed: 'Jim Turner, you are an awful liar, but I do love to hear you tell it.'

"While I love to have you congratulate me on my salesmanship, I feel much like Miss Sue felt, for I know I am not all you say I am.

"The only good thing about me is The Progressive Farmer, and I sometimes think The Progressive Farmer is making a mistake not to get a better man than I am to represent it. When I say this, God's my witness, I am not fishing for further compliments. I mean it. I truly and honestly believe that it is the most remarkable publication in America. I don't believe that any publication of any kind is as near and dear to its readers. From Virginia to Texas and from Kentucky to the Gulf, the better class of white farmers speak of it as 'our paper'—and, by golly, it IS their paper. They are getting from it more individually than the individual stockholders of the paper are getting. It sometimes peeves me with my own bosses the way they spend every dollar they make in making the paper better and trying to give the farmer more.

"I have been with them six years, and I know about all they have gotten out of it is a living and the indirect profit that comes from the increased value of its franchise, good-will and unequalled standing and influence.

"The other Southern publishers are milking their papers for all they are worth and riding around in automobiles while all of us on The Progressive Farmer are walking.

"Yet, Mr. Sands, the owners of The Progressive Farmer are doing what is, in the long run, best. They are building on a good foundation and know that some day they will have completely overcome unfair competition and won a permanent victory. Then we will do some riding.

which now do such work free of charge. Cheat seed in oats and dodder and dock seeds in clover seed are common examples. Southern hays are apt to be badly adulterated with weeds of many kinds. Poultry feeds and even some of the mixed feeds may contain weed seeds from the screenings which are likely to enter into their composition. Johnson grass, wild carrot, ragweed and many other weeds are scattered through the use of hays containing these plants. Nut grass and other weeds have often been introduced on to a farm in nursery stock. Many of the small, hard seeds are not crushed by the animals which eat them and remain unaffected by the digestive processes, thus passing out with the droppings to find the most favorable conditions for growth.

Birds probably destroy more weed seeds than they scatter, but nevertheless they often fly long distances and may thus scatter in their droppings a variety of weed seeds over a very large area.

Where weeds abound in fodders and their seeds are fed with grains, stable manure is a very effective way of spreading weed seeds, because seeds that escape destruction by heating or decay find the very best conditions possible for their germination and growth.

Composting largely destroys weed seeds, but in the process a large part of the value of the manure is lost, so it is of doubtful wisdom to compost manure to destroy weed seeds.

Many bad weeds are introduced by the railroads. Their seeds are dropped along the right-of-way and are spread to adjoining fields. Along the wagon roads of the South, weeds of all sorts abound and are allowed to grow unmolested to become scattered over the cultivated fields. Traffic in materials containing weeds or weed seeds by wagon, railroad trains and boats carry materials which may contain weed seeds long distances.

There is probably no more interesting or effective provision of nature for the scattering of weed seeds than shown in the large numbers of plants which have teeth, hooks and other means of attaching themselves to the coats of animals and to the clothing of man. Burs, Spanish needles, beggarlice and a large variety of other weeds are apt to be carried long distances by means of these special provisions for attaching themselves to various objects.

A weed is a plant out of place. A plant may, therefore, be a weed in one place and a useful plant in another. The vetches (tares) in wheat are weeds, but when sowed with oats or wheat for hay or for the purpose of enriching the soil they are most useful plants. Sweet clover was long regarded as a weed in the North, while it was serving a most useful purpose as a forage plant and soil restorer in certain parts of the South.

The losses caused by weeds in lessening the value of products, increasing the cost of cultivation and decreasing yields are so tremendous as to defy computation, and yet we do little or nothing in the South to prevent their spread. A careful study of the means by which weed seeds are scattered is the first step towards lessening their prevalence and the injury they do.

ALMOST

My friend Otto Kleen, who lives over back of the ridge, was telling me about his daughter's wedding.

"Dose Irish make me sick," he said; always talking about vat greast fighters dey are. Vhy, at Hilda's wedding de odder night, dot drunken Tim O'Toole butted in, und me und mein bruder und mein Uncle Hans und mein friend, Fritz Kunts—vhy, ve pretty near kicked him out of der house."—The Southern Homeseeker.

Try a patch of clover this fall.

THE seeds of plants are great travelers, being scattered in an interesting and bewildering multitude of ways. Plants live to produce seeds that their existence on earth may be continued. The seeds having been produced, must reach suitable soil or conditions for growth. Many more seeds are produced than find these suitable conditions for growth, as is generally the case in the production of both plants and animals. Nature produces an abundance of seed to make it more probable that some of them will find conditions suitable for growth. In the struggle for reproduction or life, many seeds are aided in finding suitable distribution and conditions for growth by various natural means; while others are scattered by man and his various activities. Unless we give some study to the various ways in which weed seeds are scattered we are apt to overlook many ways of preventing their spread; or we may even aid in the scattering of these seeds unknowingly.

Agencies That Scatter Weed Seeds

THE following are some of the ways in which weed seeds are scattered:

1. By the wind.
2. By water.
3. By the sowing with other seeds.
4. In hay and other feeds.
5. With nursery stock.
6. By domestic animals.
7. By birds and other wild animals.
8. In manures.
9. By wagon, railroad and boat.
10. By man, on his clothing or otherwise.

Perhaps the greatest aids to the spread of weed seeds in the South are our neglected roadsides, ditch banks, borders of fields and especially the uncultivated patches and our so-called pastures. Weeds grow in all these places and are generally allowed to mature their seeds unmolested, to be scattered broadcast by numerous agencies and increase the cost of cultivation or lower the quality of products the following year.

The wind is an important agency in distributing weed seeds. Some seeds are light and easily moved, while in other cases the entire plants or portions of them may be blown considerable distances. But there are special provisions of nature which aid the movement of seeds by the wind. Some seeds like the cottonwood, milkweeds and thistles have attached a downy parachute which causes them to be carried high and far, even by a gentle breeze. Others have winged appendages like the maple and basswood which cause them to be easily blown from place to place.

Water is an agent which plays an important part in scattering weed seeds. There are the same adaptations of nature to aid the carrying of seeds by water as to aid in their movement by the wind. Seeds like the docks, for example, have corky, thin wings which not only aid in their movement by the wind, but also cause them to float on the water.

Do Not Plant Weeds With Your Crops

PERHAPS the most important means by which weed seeds are scattered, as affects the farmer, is by the sowing of seeds contaminated or adulterated by the seeds of troublesome weeds. The extent to which the seeds sold for sowing are mixed with weed seeds is astonishing and the damage thus done can scarcely be overestimated. The only remedy at present is for the purchaser of seeds to demand a sample before purchasing and then have this sample examined by state or National departments of agriculture, most of

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