



What Farmers Want to Know

By W. F. MASSEY

The May Garden

IN CUTTING asparagus cut close down on the crown and leave no stump, but be careful not to injure the new shoots just starting. It is well to stop cutting early in June, and then fertilize heavily and cultivate clean the remainder of the season to get a strong growth of crowns to make big shoots next spring.

To keep a constant succession of snap beans my practice is to plant but one row at a time. When a row is up and well out of the seed leaf I plant another row, and as fast as the beans on a row get too old I dig them into the ground and plant something else on top of them, in this way always getting a little more humus-making material in the soil.

Even in a home garden there is often a difference in the soil and different treatment is needed. One end of my garden is rich and maintains all the improvements I can give it because there is a strong clay right under the surface sandy soil, while in the other end of the garden it is harder to maintain the fertility because there is a depth of sand several feet before the clay is reached, and in that end of the garden more effort is needed in restoring and maintaining the humus which it especially needs. Therefore on all the garden the crops that have done their work are turned into the soil instead of being taken off. The early green pea vines are turned into the soil as soon as the crop is off, and so with all crop remains which will decay quickly.

The early beets like the Egyptian get poor in quality in summer and it is better to make a succession by sowing seed of the Model or the Eclipse in May. A third sowing of the blood turnips is also made in June or July for winter use. Transplant the celery plants from the April sowed seed as soon as they are large enough to handle, nipping the tap roots and setting them two or three inches in the rows to make strong plants for the setting later for the crop. I have recently told how I grow celery. Now do not throw that issue away and later write to me to tell it all over again.

Plant a few rows of Stowell's Evergreen sugar corn as soon as the previous planting gets 10 inches high. Seed of the Early Flat Dutch cabbage or the Fottler's Brunswick sowed early in May will make nice heads in late summer and fall. Late cabbage and collards should not be sowed this early.

Cauliflowers should be pushed to heading by side-dressings of nitrate of soda. It will usually get too hot for them by the end of the month. When heads appear bend leaves over them to keep off the sun.

I keep eggplants growing till after the middle of May, for there is nothing gained by setting them out till the soil is well warmed. Eggplants are more tender than tomatoes, and any attempt to harden them off as we do early tomatoes will simply get them stunted and take a long time to start them into vigorous growth. I grow both the Black Beauty and the New York Improved. The Black Beauty is the earlier of the two but is always a weak grower in its early start, and the more vigorous growth of the New York makes it but little later, and the fruits are larger than those of the Black Beauty. But for

prolific bearing the Black Beauty is hard to beat.

Horseradish roots should have been planted in April, but it is not too late now if the cuttings can be had. Punch holes between the early cabbage and drop the roots in straight. Lay by the Irish potatoes with a good furrow to each side of the rows.

Leeks in the seed bed must be kept clean and cultivated till time to set in their permanent place. I usually transplant them in July, but if space becomes vacant and the plants are strong they can be transplanted in late May or June.

Cantaloupes, watermelons and cucumbers will be greatly helped by light dressings of nitrate of soda around the hills, but not touching the plants. Lettuce, too, responds very quickly to nitrate. The best lettuce for heading now is the Hanson, as it stands warm weather much better than the Big Boston. The Won-

and protected for winter use. It would seem that some way could be suggested for handling Irish and sweet potatoes, pumpkins, onions, carrots and other winter articles. I was told today that what is known as the Georgia collard can easily be grown, and the outer leaves fed to the pigs, and the collards put in trenches and covered with corn stalks and pine brush on poles elevated a little and kept nice and fresh for winter use.

This letter is evidently from a city man. I have been doing just what he suggests year after year in The Progressive Farmer, and Mrs. Patterson has shown how many vegetables can be had from the garden in winter. There is no difficulty in keeping the late crop of Irish potatoes if they are kept dark and just above the freezing point. But sweet potatoes need more careful treatment. And we have often told just how they should be treated either in the curing house or banks. Pumpkins are easily kept till Christmas, if not allowed to get frozen. Onions only need a dark place and do not mind a little freezing if not disturbed when frozen, but will be better for not freezing, but kept cold and dark. Carrots keep best in the rows where they grew, as also parsnips, salsify and late beets. Collards

cotton was so low every man who wrote to me wanted to plant early Irish potatoes for the Northern markets. I did all in my power to show them that at that time the prospect for anyone making the early Irish potato profitable was as bad as it ever had been, because of the great abundance and low price of the old potatoes.

This spring all through the section threatened by the boll weevil on the northern and eastern borders of this territory, they are now asking all about growing peanuts as a crop to take the place of cotton. They have never grown peanuts and the curious thing about it is that all seem to strike for the same crop, for none of them talk about Irish potatoes this spring, when the prospect for profit is better than it ever was. And go into Surry and Isle of Wight Counties in Virginia where every farmer is a peanut grower, just as every one south of there is a cotton grower, and they will tell you that peanuts have as many fluctuations in commercial profit as cotton, and are no more suited as a one-crop means of making a living than cotton or tobacco.

There are many and many thousands of farmers who have fine farms, good stock, fine homes well furnished and with every convenience, who never saw a cotton plant, and are so foolish as to think that men can farm and make money in the growing of corn and wheat and oats and the raising of hogs and sheep and cattle, with never a cotton plant on the land. And there are some we know in the South who are farming so that if their cotton crop was entirely lost they would not go bankrupt. There are men even in the South who have made corn, wheat, oats and stock far more profitable than the all-cotton men have made their cotton. Why, then, when any disaster threatens the cotton, go to real farming instead of hupting up information about some crop that you imagine may take the place of cotton. Get to farming with cotton, and give it help enough with other crops to enable you to succeed even if the whole of the cotton is lost.

THE BUSINESS FARMER'S CALENDAR: SEVEN THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK AND NEXT

SCREEN the house thoroughly against flies and mosquitoes. Keep stables clean to prevent flies breeding, and drain all stagnant water to prevent mosquitoes.

2. Save all the bur and crimson clover seed, likewise the Abruzzi rye. Prices of all these promise to be "out of sight" next fall.

3. As the days become longer and hotter, let the boys have Saturday afternoons for fishing, swimming or baseball. Join in the fun yourself.

4. How about those plots of forage crops for the hogs? The successful hog man so plans and plants that the hogs have something to graze on every month in the year.

5. Don't forget that upon your efforts depends the success of the garden as a saver of grocery bills. As soon as one crop has matured, follow it with another.

6. Where there is a probability that too little stalk growth will be made, provide nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia for putting around the corn and cotton.

7. Kill the weeds and bushes in the pasture and thus give the grass and clover a chance.

derful or New York is also good and makes larger heads than any other.

Onions must be kept absolutely clean. You must get right down to this crop and pull out by hand every weed and spear of grass. Onions planted from sets are apt to run to seed, and if this is allowed the onion is hollow and worthless, but if the seed shoot is nipped out as soon as it starts the onion can be saved.

Peppers can be set out early in the month. The Pimiento pepper will bear clear through the season till frost and produces more than any pepper I have ever grown. Pumpkins can be planted in the corn field; they take too much room in the garden. The hard-shelled winter squashes are better suited to the northern conditions. They are apt to rot on the vines in the South.

Spray the tomatoes every ten days with the Bordeaux mixture to prevent the leaf blight. Sow seed now for late plants to give their best fruit when the early ones are failing. For this sowing the Success, Stone, Globe and Mississippi Girl are good.

Some Suggestions

A CORRESPONDENT writes: "It seems to me that a good service could be done by The Progressive Farmer for its readers if it would enumerate the food articles which the small farmer could raise and carry into winter for family use or sale, and explain fully how each article could be most economically handled

are easily kept by turning the plant over with the head to the north and then piling the soil over the stem and lower part of the head, leaving the top open but shaded from the sun. Late cabbage will keep well in the same way, and it is not necessary to take either of them up till wanted for use or sale. Then any family can grow a surplus of the tender things and put up all they will need in winter of tomatoes, green peas, snaps, pumpkins, eggplants and rhubarb, and can also put up in the cans the wild blackberries and huckleberries and any fruits that may be in surplus. All these things are easy when the farmer once makes a real effort to make an all-the-year garden.

Why Not Go to Farming?

IN THE section of the country where no cotton is grown, and where the farmers are dependent on corn, wheat, oats, hay and stock, when any one of their products gets very low in price, the farmers of course do not like it, but they have other things to sell, and simply go on their way calmly. But let anything threaten the cotton crop and there is at once hysteresis in the South, because the majority of the growers have all their interests locked up in cotton; their eggs in the one basket. Then, instead of turning to general improved farming with the corn, wheat and other things that can be as well grown in the South as anywhere else, the Southern cotton planters as one want to know something about another crop to take the place of cotton, and invariably a crop they know nothing about. Two years ago when

Making Compost for Flower Pots

"WILL you tell me how I can prepare florist's soil? Our land has no sand, but generally a red clay soil. Works easily, but notwithstanding the use of manure and what not I cannot make a good soil for pots and beds. When I get the rocks out of it I usually have too stiff a soil for growing small things."

My practice is to cut grass sods an inch thick in the spring and put down a layer of these, grass side down. Cover this with good stable manure and then put on another layer of sods and so on, building up a square flat heap. This is let lie till midsummer and then is chopped down from top to bottom and repiled in a flat heap. By the fall this will be a mellow pile of compost, better for roses and geraniums if the sods are rather stiff. But for things needing a lighter soil mix in some sand from a creek and some fine rotten leaf mold from the forest to lighten it. Our difficulty here is that while we can get plenty of bluegrass sods, our soil is so slight that we have to hunt up clay to make it compact enough for some things. Roses delight in a clay soil if it is made rich, and geraniums do better in a rather stiff soil. In using the compost I rub it through a sieve with half-inch meshes so as to get the fibrous material of the grass and its roots well mixed in the soil to prevent its baking hard.

There is real philosophy in the story of the colored preacher who is said to have announced to his congregation in advance of taking his text, "Brethren, I have got er dellah sermon an' er five-dollar sermon. Please take up de collection so dat I can tell whichun you wants."