

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

"You can tell by a man's farm whether he reads it or not."

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AND now everybody is congratulating Dr. H. Q. Alexander, President of the State Farmers' Union. Farmers all over North Carolina will be interested in the announcement that he is to marry Miss Ethel Brinkley, of Elm City, on June 19.

THE splendid oak shown on our cover page this week grows on the farm of R. B. McLaughlin, Statesville, N. C. This stately white oak measures 30 feet in circumference just above the ground, and has a spread of branches of 106 feet. The South needs more of these stately trees.

AN OVER-subscription of the Liberty Loan bonds would do more to discourage Germany than anything else that could happen now, showing America's determination, and thus shortening the war and saving lives. We hope many farmers will become subscribers.

WE ARE going to keep emphasizing the importance of an all-the-year-round garden. Here are the vegetables recommended for June planting, latitude of Raleigh, by State Demonstration Agent Hudson: snap beans, lima beans, beet, carrot, corn, cucumbers, lettuce, melons, okra, pumpkin, radish, squash, tomato; also sow cabbage, collard and celery in beds for late transplanting.

"ROTATE the garden crops but not the garden spot," is the good advice given by Mrs. Jane S. McKimmon. On too many farms the garden is never in the same place more than two years in succession, with the result that the land is never made rich enough to grow really fine vegetables. Gardening is an intensive form of agriculture, a form requiring much hand labor in proportion to acreage, and for this reason the garden should always be the richest spot on the farm. Keep it in the same place with a good fence around it and make it as rich as possible.

THE scarcity of labor quickens interest in any plan to effect economies at this point. We are reprinting therefore an extract from a letter written to the Dallas Cotton and Cotton Oil News, by Theodore H. Price—the famous cotton authority and President of the Price-Campbell Cotton Picking Co. Denying that he has lost faith in his machine, Mr. Price says on the contrary:

"I believe the company of which I am president has a mechanically successful cotton-picking machine. The only thing in the way of its commercial introduction has been that it costs too much to manufacture it. We are now endeavoring to reduce that cost and I am hopeful that within twelve months we shall have a successful cotton-picking machine that will be within the financial reach of nearly every planter."

THE latest United States Department of Agriculture "Monthly Crop Report" reports the price of wheat May 1 this year as \$2.46, as compared with \$1.02 May 1, 1916—an increase of 141 per cent in twelve months. Corn likewise was selling May 1 this year for \$1.50 a bushel as compared with 72 cents a bushel a year before—an increase of 108 per cent. Cotton prices, on the other hand, in this twelve months' period had advanced only 64 per cent. This indicates what the one-crop farmer is up against in trying to buy bread to make cotton. And before we get through with this war, the relative difference between man's eagerness for bread and his eagerness for clothing may be even more marked. Plenty of people get along pretty comfortably in ragged clothes, but a hungry man is never a happy one. The world wants food more

than it wants raiment, and is likely to continue to do so.

The Dust Mulch Is the Thing

TWO things, plant foods and moisture, in abundance, are vitally necessary to the production of large crops. Without both of these or either of them, crops must at least in part fail. The food must be in the soil for the plant, and water must be present in order that this plant food may be kept in solution. Plants can take only a liquid diet—solid food is of no value to them.

From May until August is a critical time with most of our cultivated crops. The weather is warm and often dry, and evaporation is rapid. Under such conditions, moisture conservation is of first importance, and in attaining this every farmer should know the value of making and maintaining a dust mulch.

This mulch acts just like a blanket in keeping the water in the soil. Any farm boy who has turned over a board or plank lying flat on the ground has found it moist and cool underneath, though possibly all around the soil may have been parched and dry. The farmer who maintains by means of an earth or dust mulch just such conditions over all his fields is the man who is likely to suffer least in periods of drouth.

Move the Skeletons

NO FARMER would let the skeleton of a hog or cow lie around the house, and yet in traveling over the South it is amazing to see how many other offensive looking "skeletons" are left lying around. There are skeletons of dead buggies, wagons, plows, wheelbarrows, farm buildings, etc. Just as soon as any farm machine, vehicle or building is definitely dead—that is to say, if it is so broken up that it is not going to be alive and in actual use again—every farmer should be quick to move the skeleton somewhere out of sight.

Yet it is too often the case that the helplessly crippled old buggy is left in sight till it rots; the broken mowing machine is conspicuously in evidence until it rusts to pieces; a last year's hogpen is left just as it was when the opening was made to take the hogs out, while even a wind-wrecked barn or smokehouse may be left to disfigure the landscape and dishearten all beholders for an indefinite period.

"Mend or end it" should be every farmer's motto in all such cases. If the wrecked thing can be mended, do so quickly; if it can't, then save the useful pieces, storing in some suitable place, and destroy the worthless parts.

The first rainy day let's look around and see what "skeletons" are in evidence on our farms and make way with them. To have them lying around is taken by the passer-by to be an advertisement of shiftlessness. It will make us all feel better to get rid of them.

Food and Feed First: Plant Plenty of Grazing Crops for the Hogs

HOGS are worth from fourteen to sixteen cents a pound live weight, but corn is selling for about two dollars a bushel. In other words, hogs and corn have gone up in about the same proportion, and there is nothing to be made by feeding corn to hogs, except as part of the finishing ration.

In other words, while there are good profits to be made in hogs, these profits can only come to the man who raises them on cheap feeds. Moreover, in so far as practicable these feeds should be harvested by the hogs themselves.

Every farmer with hogs, and this should mean practically every farmer in the South, should have grazing crops for every month in the year, including first of all a good permanent pasture of Bermuda, lespedeza and bur and white clovers. If this Bermuda pasture has not already been provided, there is still time to start it this season.

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Then if velvet beans and peanuts are not in the corn, let's be sure to put in plenty of cowpeas. Cowpeas or soy beans after the oats and wheat should also go in without delay. Other fine hog crops that may be planted after the small grain are peanuts and sweet potatoes. Then in August and September arrange to get in a big acreage of oats, Abruzzi rye and bur and crimson clover.

There's big money in hogs—provided, always, we have plenty of cheap feeds for them. The time to prepare for these feeds is right now.

Some Lessons From This Year's Experience With the Oat Crop

IN NEARLY all the Cotton Belt north of the thirty-third parallel of latitude the oat crop this year is practically a failure, and much of the crop south of this line is very poor. While the results are rather discouraging, right now is the time to study the causes that have brought about these poor yields and, in so far as is possible, correct them hereafter. What are some of the conclusions we may draw from this year's experience?

1. **The winter was much harder than the average on the oat crop.** In many parts of the South the temperature was the lowest in twelve years, and we feel safe in saying that in not more than one winter in eight or ten will as low temperatures prevail. In other words, this year's experience does not at all affect the established fact that, four winters out of five, early fall-planted oats will survive anywhere south of parallel 35, which runs through southern Oklahoma, central Arkansas, and along the southern boundary of Tennessee.

2. **Early planting is safest.** Almost universally the oats that "got by" safely this year were those planted early—in September in the upper part of the Cotton Belt and in October in the lower part.

3. **Winter-killing is less on humus-filled soils.** The soil that is mellow because of a good supply of humus is usually warmer than the soil without a good supply of rotting vegetable matter, and heaving during hard freezes is certainly less. In our observation, the oats planted on lands well supplied with humus have survived while on other lands in the same neighborhood they have been killed.

4. **On most soils a top-dressing of nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia will pay.** The oat crop needs nitrogen, and this is an element in which most Southern soils are deficient. We know of fields this year where 75 to 100 pounds per acre of nitrate of soda in March actually trebled and even quadrupled the yield, as proved from unfertilized check plots in the same fields. The oat crop comes to maturity during the cool spring months when soil nitrification is going on relatively slowly, and a supply of quickly available nitrogen is very helpful.

On the whole, while the oat crop this year has been almost a failure, we are confident that four years out of five it can be made to pay, and pay well.

A Thought for the Week

SO WE had forced into our hands the sword of France. At first we bore the brunt almost alone. We made a great effort and drove our enemy back from the threshold of Paris. We gave to all the allies of France a breathing space in which to get ready to stand by our side, to place their flags alongside of ours. Now they are ready. Now you are coming. Now all freemen in the world are standing shoulder to shoulder for liberty and for justice! Yes, and so we will stand till the end of the conflict! We will thwart the reign of might in the world! In these days of battle, in these days of sacrifice, it is not for material victory that we fight, it is for moral victory. When this war is over there will be a final and permanent peace for the whole world and peace will reign in every corner of this planet. There will no longer be any force to prey upon freemen, because France had men who gave the best they had of their blood and of their souls in service of humanity!—M. Viviani, French Minister of Justice, in address in New York City, May 10, 1917.