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# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

A Farm and Home Weekly for the Carolinas, Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia.

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## Wheat and Alfalfa Inquiries Answered.

### I.—FORMALIN TO PREVENT GRAIN SMUT.

**Bluestone Unsafe, Hot Water Treatment Expensive, and Formalin or Formaldehyde is Best.**

Messrs. Editors: In reply to the inquiry of a subscriber, will say that the method of planting oats has nothing to do with the amount of smut present. The amount of smut depends entirely upon the amount of smut on the seed when the seed are planted, and that in turn depends upon the cleanliness of the field from which the seed oats are taken. Smut ranges from 5 to 45 or 50 per cent of the crop. No portion of the State is free from it, and there is always present much more than the farmer thinks there is.

Formalin has already been recommended, the strength of one ounce to three gallons of water, and this is by all odds the best remedy. It is unsafe to use bluestone; the hot water treatment is too expensive and laborious; and the formalin treatment is absolutely perfect in its work, inexpensive and easy to apply.

The druggist mentioned is perfectly correct in saying that formalin is exactly the same thing as 40 per cent formaldehyde. Either name is correct. It would seem that any druggist ought to be willing to sell it in quantities as small as a pint at least. It is true that in its undiluted form it is poisonous and the fumes of it, if inhaled for any considerable length of time, would do harm. There is, however, no danger that even the most careless and fool-hardy persons will inhale it because the first whiff of it is sufficient to warn you to keep away. I have handled it for years and have never in any way been troubled. It is no way a dangerous substance. You buy it in bottles that are corked and keep it corked until you wish to use it. Then pour it out and dilute it properly. After it is diluted the fumes are so weak they are absolutely harmless, and it is so weak that it is not at all or very slightly irritating to the hands. You need apprehend no danger in using it.

Anyone desiring more information as to the use of formalin will please apply to the Director of the Experiment Station for circular on this subject.

If you are unable to get formalin from your druggist, the W. H. King Drug Company, Raleigh, N. C., agrees to sell it at the following prices, the purchaser to pay the cost of mail transportation: One ounce bottle, ten cents; two ounce bottle, fifteen cents; four ounce bottle, twenty cents; eight ounce bottle, thirty cents; sixteen ounce bottle, fifty cents. Doubtless any drug company in larger cities will give you equally as favorable rates.

F. L. STEVENS,  
West Raleigh, N. C.

### II.—Managing Weed-Infested Alfalfa.

"Messrs. Editors: I sowed alfalfa last spring, got a fine stand, but the continuous rains brought forward grass and weeds in such abundance that I fear it has rooted out my alfalfa except in spots. Mowed three times. Do you think it would be best to sow again or leave and risk a stand? Crag-grass is well rooted on the greater part of it."

So writes A. G. S. of Guilford County, N. C.

Without seeing the field of alfalfa, it is impossible to tell whether it would be better to plow and reseed this fall or allow it to stand until the spring. I have seen fields of alfalfa so over-run with crab grass that it looked like there was no hope for the alfalfa, and then come out during the late fall and produce fine crops of alfalfa for the next year. Unless the alfalfa is dead there is hopes for it.

It might be well for A. G. S. to allow it to stand through the winter and by March he can tell whether he will have alfalfa or not. If he finds he will not have a stand, he can then plow up and resow the first of April.

T. B. PARKER.

### III.—Fertilizing Wheat; Treatment of Alfalfa.

"Messrs. Editors: I have been reading The Progressive Farmer for some little time and have noticed some timely suggestions and advice. I have been reading the fertilizer formulas in several farm papers, but have been unable to understand exactly how to apply them; so I come to you for some advice.

"I have a piece of land now in peas that I want to sow in wheat. I don't think the land needs any nitrogen. I can buy nitrate of soda at \$7 per 200 pounds, muriate of potash at \$6.50 per 200 pounds, kainit at \$1.60 per 200 pounds, and the 8-2-2 goods will cost me about \$2.10 per sack. My land is partly of clay sub-soil, the rest sandy loam with not much bottom to it. Now, which will pay me best to use, the 8-2-2 goods or buy the different ingredients that you may suggest? And if you suggest the latter, please advise me how much of the different parts to buy and how to mix and how to apply. Also tell me what filler is best to use.

"I also have a piece of land that I sowed to alfalfa two years ago, got no stand, sowed again last fall, got a fine stand, got high enough to clip, and then the crab-grass took it. I then sowed to peas, but failed to put my land in good condition, and so the crab-grass took them. I want to sow to alfalfa again this fall. My land is a loamy soil, very rich, as I have manured it two years in succession. Please advise me the best methods to pursue, as I am determined to raise it, if possible."

This inquiry came from Mr. T. H.



THE HISTORIC SCUPPERNONG VINE ON ROANOKE ISLAND.

This vine is believed to have been planted by members of Sir Walter Raleigh's famous Roanoke Island colony about the year 1585. It is probably the largest Scuppernong vine in the world, covering more than an acre of ground and yielding more than a ton of grapes each season.

Promising efforts to improving the growing habits and shipping qualities of the Scuppernong grape are now being made by the United States Department of Agriculture, Chief Pomologist Taylor writing of the matter especially for The Progressive Farmer elsewhere in this issue. It is a matter of no small importance to our Southern farmers.

Williams, of Chatham County, N. C., and was mislaid, which accounts for the delay in answering.

For Mr. Williams's wheat, I would not use a complete fertilizer, but a mixture of acid phosphate and kainit or muriate of potash. Or it might be better for him to get a bone and potash goods, 10-2, or 10-4, and sow 300 pounds per acre at the time he sows wheat.

The proper way to treat the land now growing peas which he wishes to sow in alfalfa again, will be to take the peavines off and cut the land into a good seed-bed with a disc or cut-away harrow, then reseed to alfalfa. It will be better not to break the land deep with a plow just before sowing the alfalfa, as it does better in a firm soil than in a loose soil.

T. B. PARKER.

### What Dark Tobacco Growers Are Doing.

The Planters' Protective Association of Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, official organization of the Dark Tobacco Growers in the three States named, held its third annual meeting at Guthrie, Ky., September 22nd. About 24,000 tobacco growers, including their families, attended this meeting. Speeches were made by several distinguished speakers, including Congressmen Gaines, Stanley, James, and other well-known friends of the tobacco growers. The organization is in excellent shape, and promises to accomplish much more for its members during the year to come than it has been able to

accomplish heretofore, although its record for the two years of its existence, in the betterment of the growers' status, is one to be proud of.

It is reported upon reliable authority that F. G. Ewing, general manager of the Planters' Protective Association, has sold to E. R. Tandy, representing the Italian Government, every hogshead of tobacco belonging to the Association that is suitable to the Italian trade on the basis of \$10.85. This is regarded by tobacco men as a great victory for the planters. It is their price, and all other conditions accord with the requirements of the Association.—Inland Farmer.

"Make your home an attractive place for your children," said Dr. McLendon at the Farmers' Institute Monday. We would like to sound these words in every community in the county. Along with the improvement of the farm must go that higher and vastly more important work of the cultivation of the minds of the children reared on the farm. Attractive surroundings in the way of flower beds and well kept lawns will aid wonderfully in this respect. See to it, also, that your children receive the best education possible, even though it be their purpose to remain on the farm. The farm needs now more than ever before the trained mind and the skilled hand. Financially speaking, education of the right kind pays, but ten-fold more does it pay in the things that make for the life and joy of the soul.—Stanly Enterprise.